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TRUE ROMANCE: Sass & Bide's sequined dress, featured in our spring fashion preview. Photograph by Miranda Penn Turin (page 112)

LA MAGAZINE

88 HOME DESIGN: WHERE THE PROS GO

Sleek modernist housewares and 17th-century furniture. Recycled-chopstick lamps and 400-thread-count linens. We asked interior decorators and designers around town to name their favorite shops for Case Study–era replicas, floor and window treatments, antiques restoration, and more. With resources like these, there really *is* no place like home ***by Emily Young***

98 THE RECRUIT

Matt Ludwig hails from Sacramento and lives in Simi Valley, the privileged product of white-collar parents and a private school education. He seems an unlikely candidate for the U.S. Armed Forces, but with a single oath and dreams of Iraq, private citizen Ludwig became Private Ludwig, leaving behind family, friends, and one not-quite-girlfriend in a quest to become an army of one ***by Jesse Katz***

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Fox's *Fantastic Four* opens in thousands of theaters this summer, but you'll have to break the law to see the 1993 original. Didn't know there was one? The improbable tale of a wily producer, an unsuspecting cast and crew, Roger "King of the Bs" Corman, and one of the strangest deals in Hollywood history ***by Robert Ito***

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112 RAIN DATE Need clothes as free-spirited as you are? These sexy and versatile pieces go from playful afternoon to romantic evening to rainy night **COLOR FORMS** Spring's palette is anything but basic. Here are fashions, accessories, and beauty products in the season's most surprising hues ***edited by Anne Breza***

STYLIST: BRIAN PRINCEAU/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS; HAIR: JOHN BLAINE/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS; MAKEUP: BETHANY KARLYN/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS; MODEL: KRISTINA ROSTAD/FORD MODELS

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DEPARTMENTS



HAPPY TRAILS: Trike riders at Kidspace Children's Museum. Photograph by Dave Lauridsen (page 146)

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BUZZ

Desperate Housewives actress Felicity Huffman slips and loops at the Knit Cafe, and a tiki paradise takes root in Mission Hills **PLUS:** Video game rhapsodies, Bugaboo maps, and public libraries where beauty is in the eye of the cardholder **SEEN:** William Friedkin is bowled over at the Commitment to a Cure bash at the Regent Beverly Wilshire, and Michael Chiklis is iced out at the Warner Bros./*In Style* party 27

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EDITOR'S NOTE

HIDE AND SEEK

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE SENIOR WRITER JESSE KATZ follows a 20-year-old college dropout named Matt Ludwig from the moment he meets an army recruiter in Simi Valley to the moment, six weeks later, he departs from LAX for basic training. Called "The Recruit," the story is about a young man making the most momentous decision of his life. In the course of the piece Jesse accompanies Matt as he goes to MEPS, the military entrance processing station, on the corner of La Brea and Rodeo. Protected by a chain-link fence and barbed wire, MEPS comprises half a city block. This is where the military absorbs potential recruits, administering tests, giving physicals, spelling out what jobs are available. This is where last year more than 9,000 young men and women raised their right hands and swore to protect the United States and the Constitution. Until he started his reporting, Jesse hadn't heard of MEPS. Until I read his piece, neither had I.



Los Angeles is full of such places—institutions, sometimes huge institutions, that are at the center of people's lives but are somehow invisible. Partly, of course, this phenomenon has to do with L.A.'s size. Spread over 4,000 square miles, the metropolitan area is so vast, so imponderable, it can swallow up whole demographics without anyone noticing. But there is more to it than size: L.A. is the most private of American cities. The people who built L.A. wanted to escape the prying eyes of Midwestern small towns; they also didn't want to re-create the everyone-living-on-top-of-each-other-and-knowing-each-other's-business of big cities like Chicago and New York. Here if idiosyncrasies aren't always appreciated, they are almost always tolerated—maybe because they usually happen behind stucco walls and down long driveways. In short, Los Angeles is a city that cultivates mystery. This has terrible consequences for our civic life (Joan Didion famously observed that, in L.A., only 150 people know how the city works), but it also means that even for people who have lived here for years, Los Angeles remains a city of continual surprises—a city dotted, as it were, with places like MEPS. You just have to look for them. Or sometimes you stumble upon them.

One day a few years ago I was speeding down Las Virgenes Canyon Road in Calabasas when, out of the corner of my eye, I spotted three white domes poking through some trees. It looked like a temple but not like any I had ever seen. I braked hard, turned into a driveway—not sure whether I was trespassing—and there looming before me was the Malibu Hindu Temple. With its white plaster exterior, intricate moldings, six towers, and massive courtyard, it was as stunning as it was incongruous. Except, of course, this was L.A., where nothing is incongruous. It shouldn't be a surprise that one of the largest and most authentic Hindu temples in the Western Hemisphere is off a rural road 25 miles from downtown. Like MEPS, like L.A. itself, the temple was right in front of me and entirely hidden.

Kit Rachlis
Editor-in-Chief

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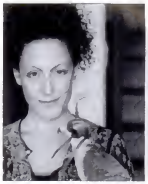
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MICHAEL KELLEY's images ("Fantastic Faux!" page 106) have appeared in *Esquire*, *British Vogue*, and the London *Telegraph*. Kelley is working on a photo project on surfers and surf culture.

EMILY YOUNG ("Home Design: Where the Pros Go," page 88) is a former senior editor of the Style section of the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*. A consulting editor for *Garden Design*, Young has written for *Elle Décor*, *Metropolitan Home*, and *The New York Times*.



MIRANDA PENN TURIN ("Rain Date," page 112) photographed the cover art for the Christina Aguilera CD *Stripped* and is working on a documentary film about the kitchen crews of celebrity chefs in Los Angeles. Her celebrity portraits have appeared in *Arena*, *Details*, and *Vogue*.

Contributing writer **GREG GOLDIN** ("Playing for Keeps," page 146) is the architecture critic for *Los Angeles*. His work also appears in the *L.A. Weekly* and the *Los Angeles Times*.



Senior writer **JESSE KATZ** ("The Recruit," page 98) was a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* from 1985 to 2000. Katz has won two City and Regional Magazine Awards, most recently in the profile category for his October 2003 piece on former Laker great Magic Johnson. His February 2002 *Los Angeles* cover story, "The Last Ride of Jesse James Hollywood," was included in the 2003 edition of *Best American Crime Writing*, which was published by Pantheon Books.

Style director **ANNE BREZA** edited this month's fashion features ("Rain Date," page 112; "Color Forms," page 120). A former beauty director at *Self* and fashion news and beauty director at *Mirabella*, Breza has written for *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *The Village Voice*.



Photographer **VICTOR SCHRAGER** ("Home Design: Where the Pros Go," page 88) has been the focus of one-person shows in New York City, London, and Washington, D.C. He has contributed to *Martha Stewart Living*, *Departures*, and *The New York Times Magazine*.



Assistant editor **ROBERT ITO** ("Fantastic Faux!" page 106) reviews books for *Los Angeles*. He has written for *The Village Voice*, *Salon*, and *MotherJones.com*, and he contributed to *At Issue in History: Japanese American Concentration Camps* and the *Continuum Encyclopedia of American Literature*.

SHERYL NIELDS ("Color Forms," page 120) was profiled in the March/April 2003 issue of *American Photo*. She has contributed to *Interview*, *Elle*, and *Blender*.

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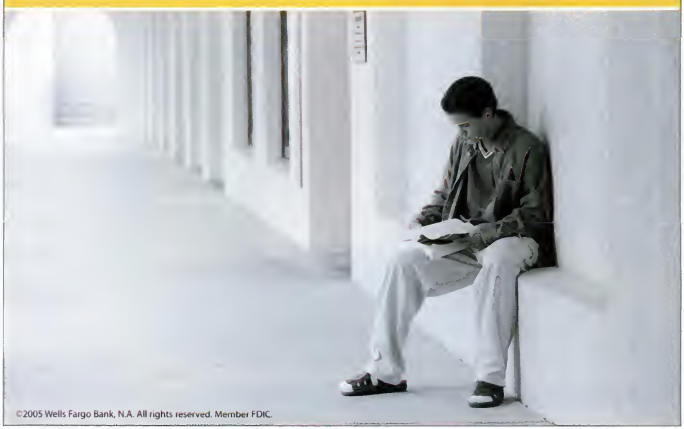
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LETTERS



BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

CLEARLY *LOS ANGELES* MAGAZINE missed the memo on the hottest baby names [Buzz, Buzzcuts, January]. Brooklyn, the name of my newest granddaughter, was listed as one of the top 100 baby names in 2004. While my daughter, Katy, and son-in-law, John, could have gone with a more L.A.-sounding name like Lawndale or Tarzana, as suggested by *Los Angeles* magazine, they chose instead to uphold one of L.A.'s most famous attributes—trendsetting.

Janice Hahn
Councilwoman
Los Angeles

BAD AFTERTASTE

L.A.'S 25 BEST RESTAURANTS" [January] was a real disappointment. The number one restaurant, Beacon, is okay as an Asian-style café. My experience there was less than delightful. The chef is so busy trying to be creative, it's as if he's forgotten to taste the food. The pizza dough was mushy, the *pad thai* was neither hot nor cold, and the other tidbits were not wonderful. The seats are jammed together. And the ladies' room is behind the restaurant, down a dark pathway lit only by a few candles. There are many great restaurants in L.A. Please review them rather than the ones that are trendy for the moment.

Phyllis Letizia
Los Angeles

YOUR ARTICLE LISTED A NUMBER OF wonderful restaurants, most of which I frequent. As for Beacon, where do I begin? The place is awful. Your recommendation of the restaurant is a classic example of the author being too weak to disregard past culinary accolades and focus on the current endeavor.

Robert Delf
Santa Monica

REGARDING "L.A.'S 25 BEST RESTAURants," I take major issue with one of your selections: Campanile. I have tried Campanile three times. Each time the food and preparation were ordinary (at best) and the service was indifferent. The prices are pretty high, too. I don't get it. I was surprised JiRaffe was not on your list. It is excellent.

Robert L. Fox
Pacific Palisades

APPLYING ONESELF

YOUR FEATURE "GETTING IN" [January] was distressingly true. For all of us who went to Cal and UCLA without paying for tutoring, test prep, or independent educational counselors, this article was both informative and sobering. However, I wish the article contained more ideas for parents to look into on their own. As the article stated, colleges are looking for a student's passion, not just a laundry list of extracurriculars like sports and chess club. For students and parents who want a unique edge, I suggest looking into educational travel opportunities. Imagine an application that contains a summer trip studying Spanish in Barcelona or biology in the Galápagos. Such trips have several benefits. They are fun and extremely educational. They prove a student's passion for different cultures and curiosity about the world. And they provide fodder for conversations with important strangers, such as admissions officers and job interviewers.

Robert A. Nakamura
Associate Director
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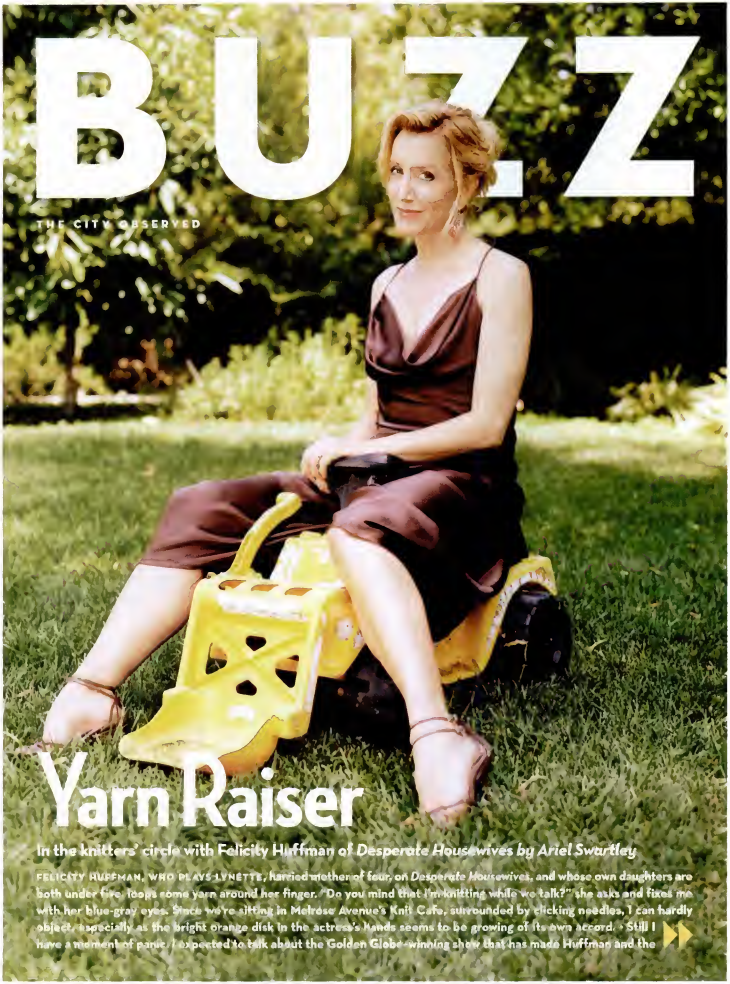
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BUZZ

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Yarn Raiser

In the knitters' circle with Felicity Huffman of *Desperate Housewives* by Ariel Swartley

FELICITY HUFFMAN, WHO PLAYS LYNETTE, harried mother of four, on *Desperate Housewives*, and whose own daughters are both under five, loops some yarn around her finger. "Do you mind that I'm knitting while we talk?" she asks and fixes me with her blue-gray eyes. Since we're sitting in Melrose Avenue's Knit Cafe, surrounded by clicking needles, I can hardly object, especially as the bright orange disk in the actress's hands seems to be growing of its own accord. Still I have a moment of panic. I expected to talk about the Golden Globe–winning show that has made Huffman and the



HARD DRIVE: Huffman in 'Sports Night' (left) and 'Desperate Housewives'

FROM LEFT: ABC; ABC/SCOTT GARFIELD

rest of her cast mates unexpected stars—not to feel desperate myself. But when I compare my six wobbly rows with the flawless circle that she assures me will be a tasseled ski hat for one of her kids by tomorrow, I appreciate the deep demoralization that her *Housewives* character regularly suffers in the presence of the show's super-homemaker, Bree. For those who haven't yet tuned in to ABC's semi-

ENCOUNTER

sly semi-soap chronicling the intrigues and meltdowns of suburban matrons, Bree (played by Marcia Cross, another prime-time veteran) is the cold wind of the ensemble, the one whose face never shows a wrinkle and whose garden is perfect. Of course, this being television, even Huffman's Lynette—a tomboy mom with a sense of humor—can construct a drop-dead dessert as coolly as she handles a soccer ball.

Happily the Knit Cafe is a long way from the competitive lawns of Wisteria Lane. "It looks really impressive, but it's not," the pigtailed, baseball-capped Huffman insists when I admire her agility with four needles. Her voice still has a western twang—she grew up in Colorado—but she speaks in the New York fast-pitch style she perfected while playing the driven television producer Dana Whitaker on *Sports Night*, Aaron Sorkin's pre–*West Wing* comedy. Television has been good for Huffman domestically as well as professionally. "You spend so much time in hair and makeup, you feel like a philistine just reading junk magazines," she explains. "For a while, during *Sports Night*, I studied Italian—which I had no talent for—but then I had two children and my brain turned to mush, so now all I can do is knit."

It's funny to hear such a self-deprecating tone from a woman who's so often cast as a competent professional. Even her *Housewives* character with her houseful of children is a former executive. Was she surprised at how the show has taken off?

"Are you kidding?" She practically hoots. "How could you not be? I felt like I was the plague of pilots—if I'm in it, it'll die. So yes. I was completely shocked." Of course, she wants it noted, the script contains some stealth weaponry.

"It's a little tongue-in-cheek, and then it's wicked. And all those ingredients make..." She pauses to hunt for a word, loop the yarn, slip the stitch. Got it. "A saucy cake," she says with a grin.

After studying at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Huffman got her start as a member of New York's Atlantic Theater Company. But as the youngest of eight children, seven of them girls, she'd already had a taste of ensemble work. "There's a group dynamic that goes on in big families, both an intimacy and an anonymity," she says, that translates well to the stage. It's also one of the appeals of *Desperate Housewives*.

"Once an episode, there's a scene where we all get together. It's a coffee klatch or a poker game. Those days are really fun. There's an esprit de corps. We're not 20-year-olds. We've all been around the block. We're all really grateful to be there."

If the show touches a nerve, Huffman thinks it's because there's a lot of pressure on women to be perfect at a job that by definition keeps changing. "I was talking to someone who said, 'You know, anything else that you spent four

AU COURANT

Upward Mobility

On a road trip with the Rolls-Royce of baby strollers

KNOWN FOR ITS LOFTY DESIGN, and loftier price tag, the $730 Frog stroller is all about adding a little flair to the bedraggled days of new parenthood. Now Frog owners can take advantage of self-guided day trips, complete with artsy maps, that Bugaboo, the Dutch company that manufactures the pram, has created for eight international cities, including Los Angeles. Illustrated by ArtCenter grad Oksana Badrak (who also illustrated an airsickness bag for Virgin Airlines), L.A.'s map is a world of urbane whimsy, where *anime* bunnies read books beside the 10 freeway and a lightning-bolt-emblazoned Trans Am barrels toward Sunset Boulevard. Created to highlight the Frog's maneuverability, the map features an accompanying itinerary that suggests Bugaboo cares as much about social mobility as physical dexterity. It consists mostly of a stroll down Robertson Boulevard, with snacks at the Ivy—which will certainly strike infants and toddlers as a counterintuitive alternative to Chuck E. Cheese's. Admits Kari Boiler, the head of marketing at Bugaboo North America, "Some kids might only make it to one stop."—*Andrea Richards*



ILLUSTRATION BY PETER HOEY


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years doing—you take up tennis, you learn a language—you would feel some sort of competency at. But motherhood—you're confronting yourself all the time. It's a process and a training. It's never an arrival.'"

There are benefits to being a Hollywood mom rather than an actual housewife. Huffman sometimes gets to work with her husband, actor William H. Macy. (Working, in fact, is how they met: He cofounded the Atlantic Theater Company with playwright David Mamet.) Before their daughters were born, Macy had a nine-episode guest slot on *Sports Night*—long enough for his and Huffman's characters to develop a romantic interest. This year he, too, was nominated for a Golden Globe. Going together as co-nominees sounded to Huffman like "the perfect date from high school. We're goin' to an awards show, we're gonna get lucky," she says in a singsong voice.

As a harried mom playing an even more harried mom, is Huffman sticking too close to home? Not to worry. In her next role—in *TransAmerica*, due to premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival this spring—she stars as a pre-op transsexual trying to connect with a son fathered years before. To be a woman playing a man playing a woman required study as well as a good costume designer.

"It's really fascinating how differently men sit and walk," she says, abandoning her knitting and getting up to demonstrate. Moving her legs apart and holding her arms away from her body, she seems a head taller than when she came in. In the books she read to prepare for the role, men spoke of taking hormone therapy and suddenly being much more affected by things like arguments with colleagues. "Isn't that fantastic? They even talked about temperature. I mean, I don't know about you, but I'm always cold. And they said, 'Suddenly it got cold all the time.'"

But back to the business at hand. The orange hat has grown to the size of a dessert plate, and Huffman is counting stitches. She needs 20, she says, before she changes to a circular needle. "I've got 16. See, we're getting stuff done!" Her enthusiasm is infectious. I'm almost ready to try another row. LA

BUZZCUTS

A LITTLE OFF THE TOP—AND BOTTOM—FOR A BETTER MARCH



Frank Lloyd Wright used 25,000 **concrete blocks** to build the **Ennis-Brown House** in Los Feliz in 1924, and the place is in a sorry state. The trust overseeing the house's restoration is offering donors the chance to adopt-a-block, perhaps to commemorate special events like weddings. Hurry now, before Larry King snaps up the entire south wall.

Ernest Goes to Test Market: Through the blessings of computer animation, the late Jim Varney's lovable yokel, Ernest P. Worrell, is back on TV hawking the inventory of Cerritos Auto Square. The ad agency that created the commercial says 92 percent of those surveyed said the actor's death in 2000 in no way diminished his prowess as a pitchman.



We respect that clothing maker **Von Dutch** is donating all proceeds from its TSUNAMI RELIEF T-shirts to those affected by the disaster in Southeast Asia, but rendering the words in the shape of an ocean wave is disturbing, don't you think?



Farmer John Meats, the family-owned pork processing plant that was founded here in 1931, **has been bought out by Hormel Foods. Farmer John spokesperson Steve Duchesne assures that its products are still going to be manufactured at the plant in Vernon. That's good news for Dodger dog fans and bad news for future generations of L.A. swine.**

JCPenney is the exclusive distributor of a line of **home furnishings** inspired by **MTV Cribs**, the show that takes viewers inside the decked-out domiciles of singers like Ludacris and Missy Elliot. Those faux suede butterfly chairs must feel out of place next to the store's chenille recliners.



The 18th hole slid into the ocean six years ago, but Donald Trump claims that the problem's been fixed for good at his Trump National Golf Club in Rancho Palos Verdes. To shore up the cliffside, Trump engaged the same structural engineers who worked such miracles on his comb-over.



L.A. dad **Greg Maxwell** says that his frustration with all those wussy diaper bags on the market inspired him to create the **Daddy Belt**, a macho, modified tool belt made of ballistic nylon and equipped with a detachable sippy cup holder and pockets for rash creams and changing pads. Sold separately is the holder for the stun gun used to mete out justice to any passersby who call it a purse.

Where do we sign up? Councilman Ed P. Reyes's office recently sent an invitation to the media to tour the $160 million Northeast Interceptor Sewer Tunnel before it was permanently sealed to "get an idea of how much wastewater and crap will flow through it." For a minute there we thought he was referring to the City Hall press office.



The first Tuesday of every month, at 2:30 p.m., we're digging, so to speak, **KCRW**'s new show **Final Curtain**, a half-hour program devoted to **obituaries**. Its eclectic roster of the recently deceased has thus far included the world's most famous juggler, the guy who invented AstroTurf, and the oldest Tournament of Roses queen.

FROM TOP: GETTY IMAGES; TOM BRITA; MATTON IMAGES; MBC; COURTESY PADDY PRODUCTIONS, INC.; MATTON IMAGES

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Polynesian Review

Goin' coconuts for an enchanted tiki bar in the Valley ***by Mark Ehrman***

FLAMES DANCE IN A 13-FOOT-HIGH lava rock fireplace that could have been transplanted from Easter Island. Bottles of Bacardi, Kahlúa, and Grand Marnier are bathed in the warm red-and-orange glow of hanging lanterns. In the back, a party of ten sip $9.50 mai tais in a thatched alcove winkingly referred to as the "kamanawanaleia" room. And sitting on a bar stool carved with an angry island god, Bobby Green—dressed in a blue Hawaiian-print shirt and houndstooth driver's cap, with a double-wide soul patch beneath his lip—blends in like pineapple juice in a piña colada. "I always wanted to do a tiki bar," says the 34-year-old owner of the Lucky Tiki, "but I also wanted to do something over-the-top."

A former student at UCLA who dropped out to school himself in L.A. nightlife, Green is best known for creating the Sasquatch-themed Bigfoot Lodge in Atwater Village and for turning Highland Park's Little Cave into a bat and jack-o'-lantern spookfest. He is now bringing to the north Valley neighborhood of Mission Hills the cultural gift that suburbia once provided in spades—that Polynesian fantasy known as tiki.

Green says he wanted his new bar to attract the kind of aficionados who flocked to his first island-themed venture, the West L.A. coffeehouse Cacao. These people read *Tiki News*, surf tiki Web sites, own art by Shag, make pilgrimages to tiki landmarks such as Bahooka in Rosemead and Trader Vic's in Beverly Hills, and meet at such tiki-ins as the recent "Tiki Oasis" at the Caliente Tropics Resort in Palm Springs. They can sniff out a poseur in a swish of a hula skirt. So a call for help was put in to the tribe's big kahuna—the German-born, Silver Lake–based Sven A. Kirsten, author of *The Book of Tiki* and one of the instigators of the tiki revival.



LUCKY CHARMS: The Lucky Tiki in Mission Hills and its owner, Bobby Green (bottom right)

"I'm concerned that the revival has a certain quality, and I try to influence it in that direction," says the arbiter of the South Pacific pop aesthetic, speaking over the phone while on his tiki photo safari at the Hawaiian Inn in Daytona Beach. "Some people say they love my book and then do something that totally misses the mark."

With Kirsten's guidance, Green assembled Team Tiki: Sculptor "Crazy Al" Evans tricked out the bar and converted the fireplace into a tiki-head cauldron; "Tiki Tony" carved island gods into the palm-stump stools; Jeff "Beachbum" Berry (author of the Beachbum Berry series of Polynesian recipe books) concocted the signature umbrella drinks; and Disney artist Kevin Kidney designed the logo. "Sven was kind of the ringleader," Kidney says. "He was adamant that it should be authentic."

But what can be authentic about an aesthetic born out of the fantasy tales of returning World War II GIs? "In its heyday, from the '50s to the late '60s, the style was ignored by critics as being tacky," Kirsten says. "That's why it's almost completely disappeared." Kirsten believes that media coverage and the ease of jet travel have made the public jaded about idyllic places. "But emotionally we still long for paradise on earth, and that's where the tiki lounge comes in."

The blenders didn't start whirring until just before New Year's, but already a crowd of self-appointed sophisticates indulges in every carved and thatched square inch of the dive bar–size joint; even the beer taps are encased in bamboo. That said, the Lucky Tiki is still an environment where Gilligan would feel more at home than, say, King Kamehameha. Of course, these days even that invokes nostalgia. "We tried to make everything look like it's been here forever," says Green, "the kind of place I would drive an hour to check out." **LA**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **GINA SABATELLA**


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Fight Songs

By hooking up bands—from Outkast to the Stooges—with video games, Tim Riley's made arrested development pay ***by Robert Ito***



CONTROL PANEL: Activision's worldwide executive of music, Tim Riley

IF HEAVEN WERE DESIGNED by a 16-year-old boy, it would probably look a lot like Tim Riley's office. Video games, Spider-Man comics, and bins brimming with the latest metal and hip-hop CDs litter the floor. A Tony Hawk skateboard—signed—hangs on the wall. There is a mini fridge filled with nothing but Red Bull and an MTV Video Music Awards moon man near one of three computer monitors.

Riley is the worldwide executive of music at Activision, the Santa Monica–based company that netted nearly a billion dollars last year producing video games like X-Men Legends and Call of Duty: Finest Hour. All those games need music, and it is Riley's job to find just the right tune to accompany a frolic through the underwater metropolis of Reef City (Shark Tale) or a guns-blazing assault on the 405 (True Crime: Streets of LA). Riley listens to CDs all day—he considers between 500 and 1,000 songs for an average game—then checks out new bands at the Viper Room and Spaceland at night.

It's a tough job. What exactly is the perfect soundtrack for, say, skateboarding? Or hunting ghosts? Like the film directors who married surfing with driving guitars and reverb, or spy thrillers with booming Lalo Schifrin scores, Riley is creating soundtracks for an entirely new generation. On Tony Hawk's Underground 2, he introduced young gamers to singers their parents liked (Frank Sinatra, Johnny Cash), bands they might not have liked (the Ramones, X), and classics you damn well better like ("Rapper's Delight," "Break On Through to the Other Side"). With full symphonic scores and dozens of licensed music tracks, video games are actually better than a lot of film soundtrack CDs—plus you get to keep the game.

Riley is in his office with Brian Pass, the producer of Ultimate Spider-Man, which is due for release later this year. Both are in faded jeans and sneakers; Riley is wearing a black T-shirt from the Brig, a bar in Venice. Pass is here to show Riley an early version of the game and to listen to a few soundtrack possibilities. A moment before, they were discussing meetings and deadlines; now Pass is fiddling with an Xbox controller, explaining how he—he, meaning Spider-Man—is going to rescue a screaming woman who is trapped underneath a burning car. "I have to come over here and punch out the fire hydrant, which puts out the fire. Oh, but see, now she's

FROM TOP: RYAN ROMERO; CHRIS NICHOLS

ARTIFACT

Keep It Clean

A new mural takes on the dirty business of oil disposal

LOS ANGELES MURAL ARTISTS have explored subjects as far-reaching as God, football, and the hazards of firing guns on New Year's Eve, but Rich Raya of Mount Washington has broken new ground with his 75-foot-long work about the sin and salvation of recycled motor oil. The tableau—on a wall overlooking the Pep Boys parking lot in Highland Park—features an environmentally friendly depiction of the local classic truck and auto show. The work is framed by two enormous hands, one of them holding a picture of a river awash in dumped oil, the other a clean and optimistic neighborhood that has disposed of it properly. "The mural is not on the street—it's in the parking lot," Raya said wistfully at the mural's unveiling. Yes, but given the number of junkers routinely being tinkered with in your average auto supply store parking lot, he couldn't have targeted his audience better. *–Ed Leibowitz*




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drowning, so I've got to jump in there and pull the car off of her."

Pass saves the woman, then tires out the Green Goblin by tricking him into hurling all of his fireballs. Riley wonders what kind of music goes with a high-speed, high-altitude tour of downtown punctuated by frequent brawls. "When you're swinging through the city, I think we're looking for a more orchestral kind of thing," he says. "Then when you're in the boss battle"—gamespeak for the big fight with the main villain—"it will transition into something poppy or maybe some industrial, heavy guitar stuff."

Riley cues up a track that sounds like something from Arnold Schwarzenegger's 1984 sword-and-sorcery epic *Conan the Destroyer*, all minor chords and big bass beats. Boom-boom-boom-BOOM, boom-boom-boom-BOOM. "This might be good for the dark stuff," he says. They toss around the idea of digitizing actual band members for a big bar scene, where the musicians play in a wire mesh cage to protect them from flying beer bottles. Riley has a couple of groups in mind—one is an established act, the other is "the next Metallica." The younger band seems to have the advantage here, being more popular "for our demo" and cheaper to license. He plays a track. "I would feel like battling against somebody with this going on in the background," he says.

As gatekeeper to some of the gaming world's most lucrative franchises, Riley wields enormous power. Games have become such a huge industry—with $9.9 billion in sales last year, it's bigger than Hollywood, although both have become intertwined—that just about every major label has a person whose job is licensing songs for video games. Andie Brokaw is that person at Warner Bros. Records. With the typical kid playing a single sports video game for a total of 50 hours, getting a song into a popular game is like mainlining music into a young child's skull. "It's amazing to get a song played in a sports stadium," she says, "but you're going to reach a lot more kids if you're in Grand Theft Auto." Riley agrees. "Everybody wants to be in a video game," he says. "Especially with newer bands, video games have become almost a form of radio." LA

INVENTORY

Like a Virgin

There really is something about Mary *by Natalie Finn*

LAST NOVEMBER, ONLINE CASINO GoldenPalace.com paid $28,000 on eBay for a ten-year-old grilled cheese sandwich supposedly seared with the likeness of the Virgin Mary. The much-hyped lunchtime staple came to Venice Beach last month as part of a promotion for the World Grilled Cheese Eating Championship. The first Virgin Mary sighting authenticated by the Catholic Church was in 1531, in Guadalupe, Mexico. "Very, very few [sightings] have been authenticated," says Tod Tamberg, media relations director for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles. "I would think that the Blessed Mother would have better things to do." Still, there has been no shortage of locally reported brushes. Here's a sampling.

Since the mid-'80s, hundreds of miracle seekers have flocked to the Mojave Desert on the 13th of each month hoping to catch a glimpse of the Virgin Mary's image in the night sky. Our Lady reportedly chooses to manifest herself as a bright blip of white light. The woman who originated these sojourns reportedly first saw a vision near her Pacoima home.

At least nine people have given written testimony that on June 24, 1989, they witnessed a Virgin Mary apparition at their friend's Pasadena home, where she reportedly appeared, in great detail, hovering above the man's apartment balcony.

In the late '80s, people gathered over many nights to see a shadowy outline of the Virgin Mary that appeared on the garage door of a home in Long Beach. The not-so-immaculate source: dead bugs trapped in a neighbor's outdoor light.

A former priest drew people to his North Hollywood home in the early '90s to see a backyard tree that had fungus on it that formed the Virgin Mary's outline.



On December 8, 1992, a Montclair woman reported seeing a luminous cross created by moonlight on her bathroom window. She saw the Virgin Mary and her entourage—a host of angels—appear in the cross's center. She said that the vision returned every month during the full moon for at least three years.

A Los Angeles man claimed to have a Virgin Mary-shaped bee sting rash on his back on June 4, 2004. Holysightings.com didn't know whether the man ever tried to steal honey again.

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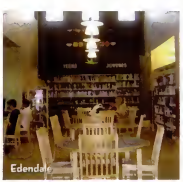
The public library's building spree has created a bevy of future landmarks *by Leta Shy*

LARGE BOOKSTORES can be a celebration of homogeneity: similar neutral color schemes, furniture, and facades. Not so for the Los Angeles Public Library, which has spent the last six years shunning such uniformity. Thanks in large part to a $178.3 million bond approved in 1998, the library has already renovated or rebuilt 30 of its 71 branches. The latest, in Westwood, opens this month, and six more will be completed in the next three years. Some of the city's best architects have incorporated details that capture the historical significance of one community, the natural beauty of another. Here are a few highlights of the institution's ongoing project.

BRANCH: Arroyo Seco, 6145 N. Figueroa St. **COMPLETED:** June 2003. **ARCHITECT:** M2A Milofsky and Michali. **FOOTNOTE:** Arroyo river rocks cover the library's facade as a tribute to Highland Park's love of the Craftsman style.

BRANCH: Chinatown, 639 N. Hill St. **COMPLETED:** February 2003. **ARCHITECT:** Carde Ten Architects. **FOOTNOTE:** The feng shui design features an overhanging roof and a traditional Chinese palace floor plan.

BRANCH: Edendale, 2011 W. Sunset Blvd. **COMPLETED:** September 2004. **ARCHITECT:** Killefer Flammang Architects. **FOOTNOTE:** After a hardware store that showcased a work by L.A. muralist Ernesto de la Loza had to be demolished to make room for the new library, the city commissioned the artist to paint a montage of Echo Park and Silver Lake.



BRANCH: Encino-Tarzana, 18231 Ventura Blvd. **COMPLETED:** April 2003. **ARCHITECT:** Steven Ehrlich Architects. **FOOTNOTE:** The carpet's jungle leaf pattern is an homage to Tarzan creator and former area resident Edgar Rice Burroughs.







BRANCH: Hyde Park, 2205 Florence Ave. **COMPLETED:** December 2004. **ARCHITECT:** Hodgetts & Fung Design Association. **FOOTNOTE:** The gold-painted exposed nuts and bolts and glittery copper roof give the branch a "jazz, hip-hop, and bling-bling" feel, says architect Craig Hodgetts.

BRANCH: Palisades, 861 Alma Real Dr. **COMPLETED:** February 2003. **ARCHITECT:** Killefer Flammang Architects. **FOOTNOTE:** Bricks and beams have been recycled from the old branch, and stone from local Bouquet Canyon echoes the rustic look of the adjacent park.

BRANCH: Pico Union, 1030 S. Alvarado St. **COMPLETED:** May 2004. **ARCHITECT:** M2A Milofsky and Michali. **FOOTNOTE:** The branch mimics the beaux arts style of a typical Carnegie library to blend in with the surrounding neighborhood, which was recently designated a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone.

BRANCH: Sylmar, 14561 Polk St. **COMPLETED:** September 2003. **ARCHITECT:** Hodgetts & Fung Design Association. **FOOTNOTE:** As a nod to the city's industrial background, the architects faced the library's sides with metal normally used for tractor trailers. **LA**

ENCINO-TARZANA: STEVEN EHRLICH ARCHITECTS. PALISADES: KILLEFER FLAMMANG ARCHITECTS. PICO UNION, EDENDALE: LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY



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Teri Hatcher and Marcia Cross at Warner Bros./*In Style*



Dick Wolf, Mariska Hargitay, and Jeff Zucker at NBC Universal/Focus

SEEN

Gold Diggers

WITH SO MUCH BUBBLY BEING DOLED out at the Beverly Hilton during the Golden Globe Awards, most folks were already lit by the time they started the party crawl through the hotel. HBO was the first stop for Robin Williams, who held his Globe low and darted through the crowd to a table at the Moroccan-themed party around the pool. Emily Watson, Javier Bardem, and newly minted couple Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi all toasted their successes before the fire marshals started thinning the crowds. The badged ones even blocked the door at the Warner Bros./*In Style* to-do, forcing Michael Chiklis to cool his heels alongside Jennifer Love Hewitt and her date at the back entrance. While the Desperate Housewives were able to sneak into the shindig, Christine Lahti had to wait in the lobby for a spell. "It's like being on the subway," she sighed. —*Kari Mozena*

"I am surprised tonight. You think, 'No, it's not important,' then, 'Yeah—it's important.'"

—MARTIN SCORSESE, after winning, backstage at Golden Globes



Ian McShane at HBO

"I might hit Nicollette [Sheridan] over the head with it."

—TERI HATCHER, trophy in hand, backstage at Golden Globes



Jamie Foxx and Leila Arcieri at NBC Universal/Focus



Portia de Rossi and Ellen DeGeneres at HBO



Luke Wilson and Allison Eastwood at Warner Bros./*In Style*

"They keep the drinks coming. It's definitely fun."

—WYCLEF JEAN, party hopping after Golden Globes

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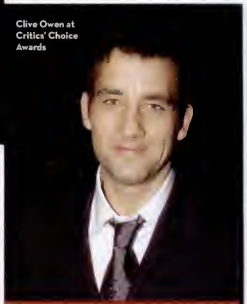
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Paul Giamatti and Virginia Madsen at Critics' Choice Awards



William Friedkin, Van Cliburn, and Robert J. King at Commitment to a Cure



Clive Owen at Critics' Choice Awards

SEEN

Critical Mass

CRITICS AND THE SUBJECTS OF THEIR critiques called a truce long enough to eat dinner together and collect trophies at the Critics' Choice Awards, held at the Wiltern Theater. *Sideways* won every which way, and celebrity goody bags were donated to tsunami victims (not that designer chocolates would be at the top of their list of necessities). There wasn't a silverware clank or errant whisper in the Regent Beverly Wilshire when pianist Van Cliburn took the stage there at the Commitment to a Cure bash. Director William Friedkin accepted an honorary award at the gala, which benefited the Arthritis Foundation. "It's like getting the pope to bless this event," Friedkin said of the pianist. Gena Rowlands, Mariette Hartley, and Eva Marie Saint sparkled at the launch party for *Los Angeles* magazine's February "Movie" issue. The lovely Lupe Ontiveros partied until last call. —*K.M.*

"Between the idea and the final print so much can go wrong."

—Former MPAA head JACK VALENTI, on filmmaking, at Commitment to a Cure



Lupe Ontiveros at *Los Angeles* magazine

"My hands are freezing, my ass is sweating—I'm bipolar."

—THOMAS HADEN CHURCH, accepting his Critics' Choice Award



Michael Moore and Tim Robbins at Critics' Choice Awards

"Do you get the feeling looking at me that I'm in the witness protection program?"

—MICHAEL MOORE, minus his usual duds, at Critics' Choice Awards



Tom Cruise with mom Mary Lee and sister Lee Anne at Critics' Choice Awards

CRITICS' CHOICE: JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC; COMMITMENT: TY & GIRL: ED GLENDINNING; LOS ANGELES MAGAZINE: FRAZER HARRISON/GETTY IMAGES

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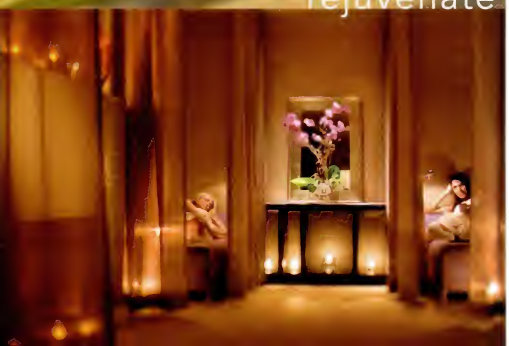
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PHOTOGRAPH BY **MINDEE CHOI**

PRIME FINDS



Pool Pride

A transparent carryall is a classy way to control the mess. Prada Sport tote; $250 at Fred Segal, Santa Monica, 310-393-4477



Aqua Socks

Designed to fit in the hull of a kayak, these sneaks look sleek—wet or dry. Puma K-1 sneakers; $110 at Puma, Santa Monica, 310-458-2777



Free Flow

It looks like a skateboard but rides like a snowboard—with this new hybrid you balance and glide. Flowboard; $80 at Big Five Sports, Pasadena, 626-795-3111

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This chronograph watch has a nautical face and functions that will steer you straight. Louis Vuitton "Regate" watch; $6,900 at Louis Vuitton, Beverly Hills, 310-859-0457



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STYLIST: ROBIN TUSK

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MINDEE CHOI**

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Surf 'n' Turf

In this suit, guys can chase the waves and keep their cool. Vilebrequin "Moorea" shorts; $145 at Vilebrequin, Beverly Hills, 310-205-9087



Glare Wear

Snowboarders and skiers alike are falling for this season's neon shades, and the extra lens is rad. Electric "EGI" goggles; $100 at 118 Boardshop, Hollywood, 323-464-5820



Suit Case

The style works for practicing your backstroke or lying by the pool. St. John "Hothouse Collection" tankini; $220 at St. John Boutique, Beverly Hills, 877-755-8463

Pro Choice

These wristbands are a net win, especially for the 90210 crowd. Chanel sweatband set (with matching headband, not shown); $140 at Chanel, Beverly Hills, 310-278-5500



Phat Burner

This designer line for Adidas makes it official. You can look hot at the gym. Adidas by Stella McCartney cotton "Ringerback" tank; $70 at Adidas, Santa Monica, 310-260-0052



Tiny Tunes

It's the size of a lighter and holds 250 songs—the newest iPod is the ultimate side-kick for burning calories. iPod "Shuffle", $99 at Apple, Glendale, 818-502-8310





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Triple Threat

From the address to the designs, Marc Jacobs's new L.A. shops reflect his irreverent style

MARC JACOBS isn't just launching his first store in Los Angeles. By the end of the month he will have opened three spaces on Melrose Place: Marc Jacobs Collection, Marc by Marc Jacobs, and the Marc Jacobs West Coast headquarters (replacing the accessories boutique he opened in November). Unlike most designers who set up shop here, he's not just looking for more red-carpet action; he won't be dressing anyone for the Academy Awards—that he's aware of, at least. Known for his youthful, edgy designs, sometimes with a retro feeling but always modern-looking, the 41-year-old New Yorker divides his time between Manhattan and Paris, where he is artistic director at Louis Vuitton for LVMH. Ever since his 1992 "grunge collection," his signature styles have gained a cult following among such tastemakers as Sofia Coppola, Kate Hudson, Liv Tyler, and Natalie Portman.

Q+A

Why Melrose Place, and why now? My business partner, Robert Duffy, and I had thought about being in L.A. before, but LVMH suggested a space on Rodeo Drive. That's totally not what we're about, and it certainly isn't what L.A. means to me. Rodeo Drive is great for *Pretty Woman* but has nothing to do with our lifestyle. Robert fell in love with Melrose Place and wanted to capture the same feeling as our stores on Bleecker Street in New York. It's not to be a rebel—it's just that we're trusting our instincts and what feels good to us.

How would you describe L.A. style? Studied casual. It's obviously considered, but it just comes off very easy, and quite sexy, really, which is so American, anyway. But in L.A. you really feel that style can be practiced because you go from place to place in your car, not on foot. And you can wear high heels all day because you don't actually have to walk in them. You can dress how you want to look *in* the restaurant, not on the way to it. It's not that I don't see plenty of girls in short skirts and transparent dresses in New York, but in L.A. you can believe that there's not going to be a problem with it 'cause you're not walking down the street with people howling at you.



Who will wear your clothes? We don't actively pursue dressing people, and I'm very proud of that. If you like what we do and we can get it for you for a certain occasion, we're happy to oblige.

Is there one item from your collection that everyone will want? We did a little double-face silk dress that's dark on one side and light on the other, very chemise-y, without any definition at the bosom or the waist. It's a new shape, and the colors are really beautiful.

Where do you like to shop in L.A.? I work with a wonderful person in L.A. who I love—interior decorator Paul Fortune. He helped me do the apartment in Paris. In fact, I've bought a lot for it in Los Angeles. At Retro Gallery we found tons of wonderful glass, ashtrays, vases, and other objects. We also go to Blackman Cruz, and I got all my doorknobs at Liz's Antique Hardware.

What's your favorite beach? I've been to Malibu once, where I had the pleasure of meeting David Hockney. And I have to say, somewhere in my referential '70s mind, oh God, it would have to be Malibu.

If you lived in L.A., where would that be? I don't know. I've always loved the name Laurel Canyon, maybe because of Joni Mitchell's *Ladies of the Canyon*. I don't like the name Silver Lake, and Beverly Hills says "Rodeo Drive" to me.

FROM TOP: WALTER CHIN/ICON INTERNATIONAL; KATHLEEN CLARK



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Junior League of Los Angeles

We Salute Our 2005 Spring Gala Benefit Honorees!



Evelyn H. Lauder

Senior Corporate Vice President, The Estée Lauder Companies Inc.
Founder, The Breast Cancer Research Foundation

Recipient, Junior League of Los Angeles' 2005
Lifetime Achievement Award

A recognized business leader and philanthropist, Mrs. Lauder is known for her advocacy for breast cancer education, research, prevention and awareness. In 1992, Mrs. Lauder introduced the first National Breast Cancer Awareness Month by spearheading the distribution of hundreds of thousands of pink ribbons and "Breast Self-Exam" instruction cards at Estée Lauder counters across the United States. This campaign has given away more than 40 million pink ribbons and educational brochures and bookmarks around the world. In 1993, Mrs. Lauder established The Breast Cancer Research Foundation to address a crucial lack of funding for research. Under her leadership, the Foundation has grown to become the largest national organization dedicated exclusively to funding breast cancer research. To date, it has raised over $85 million, and last year awarded over $14.5 million to 80 researchers around the world.



Judith G. Jones

Junior League of Los Angeles' 2005
Spirit of Voluntarism Honoree

Judith (Judy) G. Jones is a former President of the Junior League of Los Angeles and a noted Los Angeles civic leader. During her tenure with the League, JLLA accomplished a wide range of activities, including advancing arts programs for school-age children, hosting the only gubernatorial debate between Jerry Brown and Houston Flourney and partnering with the Rape Treatment Center to educate women and empower victims of this crime.

Taking the skills learned in the League, Judy continued her spirit of voluntarism by serving as the President of the Women's Council and as a director for KCET, the public television station for Southern California. She is the also the former President of Planned Parenthood of Los Angeles, a founding member of the Irene Dunn Guild of St. John's Hospital and is a trustee for Wellesley College and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. For her years of service as a trustee for the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles Investment Trust, Bishop Jon Bruno named Judy an Honorary Lay Canon in 2003.

The Junior League of Los Angeles (JLLA) has served the greater Los Angeles community for nearly 80 years, empowering and training women to become community leaders through hands-on volunteer service. JLLA works with agencies throughout Los Angeles to improve the health and education of women and children in the area. Current JLLA projects include the Downtown Women's Center, Chrysalis, Wonder of Reading and Hollygrove.

Each year, JLLA hosts its annual Spring Gala that recognizes two women for their commitment to community service. This year, the League is honoring Evelyn H. Lauder with its Lifetime Achievement Award and Judith G. Jones with its 2005 Spirit of Voluntarism Award.

The JLLA 2005 Spring Gala on March 5 is the largest fundraiser for the League. For more information about the event, or how you can join JLLA in honoring these outstanding women, call (323) 957-4280. www.jlla.org

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF LOS ANGELES, INC.
Women building better communities

"At Nordstrom, we are committed to preserving the health and vitality of communities in which we serve. It is important for us to offer support to community organizations through contributions, outreach programs, special events, and volunteerism. It is for this very reason we are so pleased that the Junior League of Los Angeles is honoring two amazing women who embody community awareness and volunteerism - Judy Jones and Evelyn Lauder. Nordstrom is proud to work with Estée Lauder Companies, and congratulates Evelyn Lauder and the Estée Lauder Companies, who share the same principles of community service and philanthropy as Nordstrom."

- Dale Cameron Nordstrom Executive Vice President, Cosmetics

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Nordstrom would like to recognize Evelyn Lauder, Judy Jones and The Junior League of Los Angeles. Their commitment to our community is truly an inspiration.



MAKEOVER: Bernard Parks has transformed his image from deposed police chief to solid councilman and candidate

Second Chances

EVEN IF BERNARD PARKS LOSES HIS CAMPAIGN FOR MAYOR, HE WILL VANQUISH SOME GHOSTS FROM HIS PAST BY KEVIN RODERICK

BARRING A STUNNER, BERNARD Parks isn't going to be mayor of the city where he served as a cop for most of his life. Don't dismiss him, though, as merely a spoiler who's only on the March 8 ballot to exact revenge for his firing as police chief by a mayor he loathes. Sure, he'd take a moment to appreciate the plot twist should James K. Hahn lose. But if Parks had just proved to be a more capable campaigner, he might have played himself into the conscience of the race.

So far, the front-runners haven't closed the sale with voters. In front of crowds, Hahn and Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa default to safe, consultant-polished message bits. Former assembly speaker Bob Hertzberg pops his points earnestly, but wonkish lectures don't enthrall audiences. That has left room for Parks and, to a lesser degree, the underfunded state senator Richard Alarcón to wow them with plain talk and populist appeals. Both men connect emotionally, but heads nod more vigorously when Parks rolls out his case that crime, traffic, and special interests are ruining Los Angeles and that the mayor is letting it happen. "We were promised we would be the safest big city in America...but what we got was the biggest corruption scandal in 70 years," he likes to say. He tells black audiences that eight in ten of them voted for Hahn in 2001, a mistake they shouldn't make again. "If he fooled you once, it's his fault. If he fools you twice, it's your fault." His best line, measured by laughs and the scribbling pens of reporters, has been "This mayor has an answer for almost everything, but he doesn't have a solution to anything."

Parks's easiest target is the flexible LAPD workweek Hahn approved shortly after taking office. Crowds tend to listen when it's the ex-chief who accuses the mayor of buying the police union's endorsement with an innovative schedule that turns street cops—many of whom live outside the city—into visitors. Some have taken side jobs, he complains, and come to Los Angeles to work their shifts 120 or so times a year. "People fall out of their chair when you tell them officers only work three days," Parks says.

The Crenshaw-area councilman also scores with doubts about another labor-backed project, Hahn's plan to invest $11 billion in a makeover of LAX: "You and I will not be able to drive down Sepulveda

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL KELLEY

You COULD BE THE LEAD IN A CHOCOLATE FILM, WALK THE CHOCOLATE CARPET, THANK THE CHOCOLATE ACADEMY IN A THICK **CHOCOLATE** ACCENT, AND YOU'D STILL BE HUMBLED BY THE RAW *chocolate talent* YOU'LL FIND IN THIS WARM, TINY CUP.



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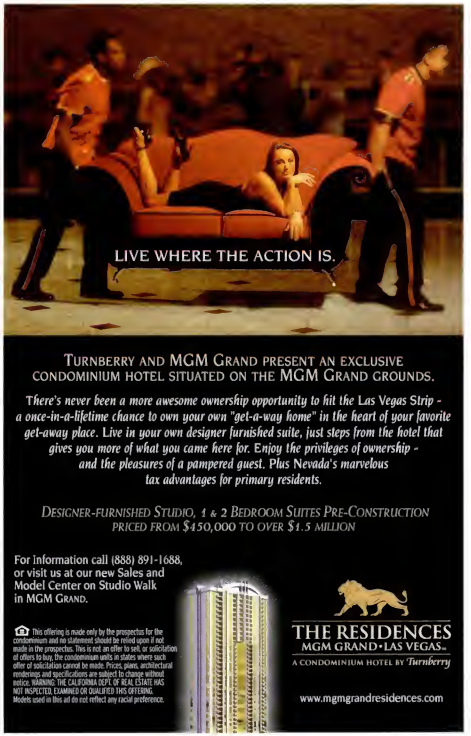
if they allow 70 million people to come to an airport that doesn't have a public transportation system." He's ruthless when it comes to the ethics questions being raised about Hahn's administration: "He's created an environment of corruption. I never heard of pay-to-play until I got on the city council."

Such arrows zing where they hurt Hahn the most. Parks's pitch is tuned for the ear of older residents in the middle-class African American neighborhoods, such as Crenshaw and Leimert Park, that elected him to the city council in 2003. He is also trying to attract whites and Asian Americans in pro-police areas of the Valley. These fragments of the city electorate gave Hahn the victory edge over Villaraigosa four years ago, and he probably needs them to win a second term. They represent the most conservative blocs up for grabs, so for them Parks is offering to be the pro-business alternative in a field of labor-cozy liberals.

He hopes to appeal to people who remember him as chief not because of the Rampart scandal and the way his tenure came to a crashing end but because of how elegant and commanding he looked in uniform. Parks stands six feet three with a spine as straight as a steel rod. *People* magazine once put him on its "50 Most Beautiful People" list. Cable TV sexologist Susan Block cooed in print that he was an "African American Cowboy," "tall, dark, svelte and sexy, with deep soulful eyes, a sensuous but rugged mouth, that distinguished silver tint to [his] hair."

Parks's run for mayor is completing the transformation of his image from policeman to politician that began when he convincingly won an open seat on the council. At 61, he is the oldest contender, and he's been working as hard as anybody. (Endurance is a family trait. His mother, Gertrude, attends some campaign appearances. Her mother, Agnes Smith, who will turn 102 in April, still gets out.) Parks has floated his own plan for the airport and another one to ease traffic around the city. They show he's in this to become mayor, he says. Settling scores has nothing to do with it. That would be taking advantage of friends, contributors, and volunteers. "This isn't about winning a moral victory," he says.

PARKS CAME TO L.A. FROM Texas when he was a baby. In 1965, the year Watts exploded, he was part of the second generation of young blacks to join the Los Angeles Police Department. The first, which included Tom Bradley, knew they had the wrong skin color to rise through the ranks and left early to pursue other careers. Parks stuck around, earning his degree from Pepperdine University (as did Hahn) and moving up under conservative chiefs such as Ed Davis and Daryl Gates. After becoming deputy chief, he thought he was in line to be the first African American to lead the LAPD. In 1992, his hopes were crushed when Bradley—coming to the end of his 20 years as mayor—was able to replace his nemesis, Gates, and recruited an outsider, Willie Williams from Philadelphia.




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Williams was brought in to reinvent a department then reeling from the Rodney King beating and its aftermath. He juggled the senior staff, exiling Parks to a lesser position—one from which he kept building relationships outside the spotlight. Williams eventually alienated people with a disengaged management style. In 1997, Mayor Richard Riordan and a new police commission looked for a replacement. Parks finally got his dream job.

At first he seemed to be the kind of chief that Los Angeles deserved: capable, photogenic, and homegrown. His five-year term, however, was turbulent. Questionable shootings brought relentless media attention. Rogue cops in the Rampart Division invited new calls for reform. Parks believed in diversity more than his predecessors did, drawing praise in the gay community and elsewhere. But he was surprisingly old school when it came to outside scrutiny. A propensity to micromanage and to be gruff with underlings didn't help, and he engaged in open warfare with the Police Protective League. Soon after Hahn became mayor, he agreed with the union that it was time for new leadership.

It was a risky move for Hahn. If he becomes the first mayor since Sam Yorty to lose, pundits will point to black defections to Parks. Still, it was the right call. Morale was shot, and officers were fleeing the department. Hahn's hire, William Bratton, has good relations with the union, the public, and the press. In fact, if Hahn wins, Bratton's popularity could be the reason.

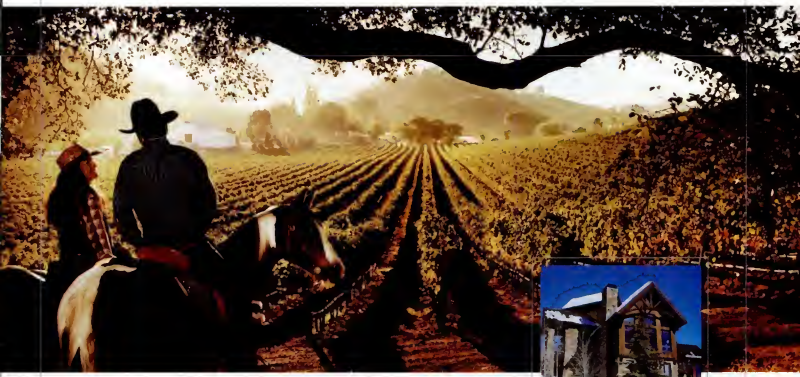


WITH PARKS YOU GET THE family package. His son, Bernard junior, shares his dad's birthday and high school alma mater (Daniel Murphy) and left a newswriting job at CBS 2 to serve first as press deputy in Parks's council office, then as chief of staff. He took a leave this year to help run the campaign. "Unlike most parents, I get a return on my educational investment every day," Parks senior quips.

The more prominent part of the team is Bobbie, Parks's wife of more than 35 years. She helped him cram for police exams when they were younger and was a familiar presence around Parker Center. In the campaign for mayor, she has proved to be an imposing force. At the December opening of Parks's headquarters in the Crenshaw district, Bobbie was the belle of the morning in a red suit. A tootling jazz trio kept time as she greeted old friends and nudged the shy toward pans stuffed with chicken, meatballs, and rice. These were the loyal folks, people the couple had met while raising four kids in southwest L.A. When it was time to introduce the candidate, Bobbie did the honors. First, however, she made her own wishes clear: "I'm pleased to say that I have the chance to be the first lady of the city. I want to be that one who you say, 'This woman represents our city.'"

She has always been an outsize player in her husband's public life and career. "It's a two-for-one deal," says Kerman Maddox,

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the KCAL 9 political commentator who managed Parks's council campaign. "Bobbie Parks plays a huge role in the life of Bernard Parks. Without her, he never would have become chief. They finish each other's sentences." However, her influence in the mayoral campaign has been controversial. A succession of campaign managers have quit, complaining about Bernard and Bobbie's refusal to accept advice and their tight grip on matters better left to the pros. News stories blamed her control over details and access to the candidate for driving off potential supporters. Soul Vine, a gossip and notes column in South L.A.'s *Wave* newspaper, praised an *L.A. Weekly* piece for revealing "virtually everything the community has been saying about that campaign, up to and including Bobbie Parks's Lady Macbeth role and the fact that no one involved in any previous Parks endeavor will touch this campaign." The columnist, Betty Pleasant, has not been especially friendly to Bernard, either, chiding him for verbally threatening a blogger who reported on a dispute at city hall. "We all know he's imperial, high-and-mighty, thin-skinned and can't take criticism," she wrote.

Parks makes no apologies for his wife. "Bobbie Parks is an integral part of everything I do," he says. One of her charms is that she works for free. Parks's campaign has been starved for cash. His reluctance to personally call on donors has frustrated his consultants, but the greater obstacle is that many of them decided early that he lacked citywide appeal.



EVERYONE AROUND THE PARKS campaign sticks to the story that the endgame is about winning. If he does, he will be L.A.'s second African American mayor. When Bradley beat Yorty in 1973 to become the first, his coalition of black voters and white liberals went on to dominate city elections for a generation. No such historic movement is behind Parks. His only notable early endorsements came from black entertainers such as Bill Cosby and Nancy Wilson and from Mike Antonovich, the most partisan Republican member of the Board of Supervisors. When the African American prospect for mayor needs help from a Valley conservative, you know times have changed. Blacks' political clout was ascendant in Bradley's day, but now it is Latinos whose numbers and power are on the rise. That puts a burden on Parks, who may represent the last shot at electing a black mayor for a long while.

So for the third time Parks is becoming a community rallying point. As chief he was the highest-ranking African American in city government. When he was being ousted, leaders such as Magic Johnson, Representative Maxine Waters, and Reverend Cecil Murray—along with pretty much everybody else who mattered—came to his defense. Parks got a lot of support again when he ran for the council, winning the seat vacated by Mark Ridley-Thomas. There are good reasons why the embrace isn't as warm these days. Some black leaders are close to Villaraigosa or Hertzberg, and Hahn

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has friends in the neighborhoods where he grew up and where his dad, Kenneth, was a popular county supervisor for decades. Also, there's nothing like backing a winner.

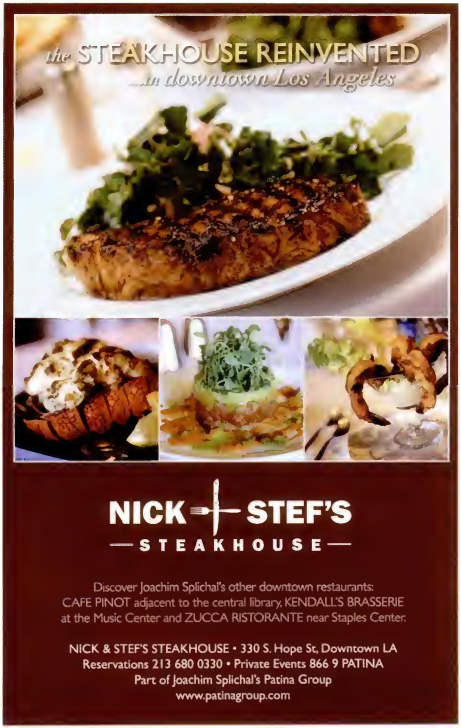
Crucially for Parks, he's now just one of three black council members, the one planted atop the mayor's do-not-call list. It matters, too, that Parks leans more conservative than other black politicians in the city. He's not a lone wolf—he joined with Waters and others in arguing against the county's closure of the trauma center at King/Drew Medical Center—but on hot-button issues like the opening of a Wal-Mart in the old Crenshaw Boulevard Broadway store he opted for jobs over concerns that Wal-Mart is nonunion and might hurt local merchants. He's for development, and while Hahn and liberal black leaders push for more affordable housing, he encourages market-rate homes and apartments that make his district look more prosperous.

No prominent African American leaders signed on early or attended the Parks headquarters opening. As the election nears, some have made modest public shows of solidarity. No one wants him to be embarrassed. Parks doesn't have to win, but a flop would be damaging. The stronger his finish in the primary, the more valuable his endorsement will be in a runoff. If he helps to elect a new mayor, black political clout will grow. "There is a desire in the community to have an impact on the race," says Raphael Sonenshein, a Cal State Fullerton political scientist who has written the definitive book about the Bradley phenomenon.

When the African American prospect for mayor needs help from a Valley conservative, you know times have changed.

As a councilman, Parks has shown political skills. Shrewdly guarding his cards, he observed a behind-the-scenes battle for the council presidency until the pivotal moment and then gave the deciding vote to a grateful Alex Padilla. Parks emerged as chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee and received a seat on the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission, where he gets to push his pet project: again filling the historic stadium with National Football League fans on autumn Sunday afternoons. He has also developed a good relationship with Villaraigosa, so it wouldn't be a surprise for Parks to endorse him in a runoff.

If Villaraigosa ended up winning it all, the stumbling race Parks has run wouldn't have been a total loss. He would continue serving on the council, this time with a friend in the mayor's office. He would have helped people forget that he was the police chief who got fired. And, of course, the man who fired him would be gone from City Hall. LA





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Money Player

THE DODGERS' KIM NG IS WIDELY TOUTED AS THE WOMAN LIKELIEST TO RUN A MAJOR-LEAGUE CLUB BY KAREN WADA



THE CLOSER: As assistant general manager, Ng has made a specialty of handling difficult deals

IT'S A GOOD THING THAT KIM NG fell in love with baseball. In any other sport an Asian American female with a penchant for statistical analysis would be odd woman out. Baseball, however, has always been obsessed with numbers, the more arcane the better, from box scores to rotisserie lineups. In recent years, spurred by skyrocketing payrolls, that obsession has morphed into the cost-effective approach to picking players known as Moneyball. Under this system the projections of young execs with laptops have trumped the hunches of old-timers. Intellect and lack of field experience have gone from vices to virtues.

Blessed with the right talents at the right time, Ng has risen quickly through the major leagues' power ranks, a world that wouldn't have given her a second look a decade earlier. She broke in with the Chicago White Sox as an intern in 1990; eight years later the New York Yankees made her baseball's youngest assistant general manager at the time. Today, as she enters her fourth season as assistant GM of the Dodgers, she is known as a tough negotiator—*L.A. Times* columnist T.J. Simers cites the "Ng Fear Factor"—and is touted as the woman likeliest to lead a club of her own.

"I'm fortunate," says Ng. "A generation ago I wouldn't be where I am." Neither, it should be noted, would dozens of her male colleagues. With her, however, questions about background or vision carry an extra bite of skepticism.

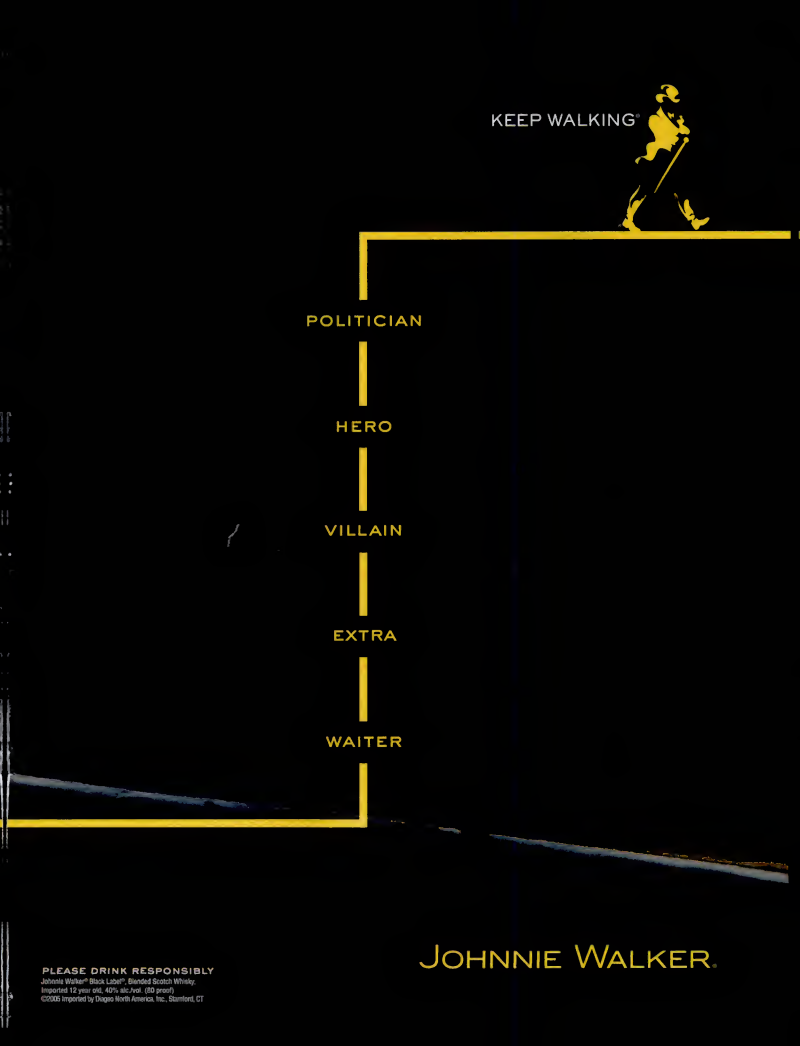
Ng, who is 36, is aware that some people think that rather than hurting, race and gender have helped, pushing her image from *good*—no one questions her capabilities—to *great* because the sport needs to show a progressive side. (The major leagues have produced only three minority GMs and three female assistant GMs.)

"I'm in the spotlight for a lot of reasons," Ng says one cloudy afternoon as she sits in Dodger Stadium in the seats to the left of home plate. "It's because of what I do—and because of what I represent." She leans back, slender and unassuming in a white collared shirt, dark slacks, and a leather jacket. "Hey," she says with a shrug, "I just concentrate on doing my job. What's the big deal?"

She's good at keeping a poker face, but not good enough to suppress a smile that suggests she likes being in the thick of a fight. "Yeah," she finally admits, a lot of things get her "fired up." Ng is more than a stats wonk. She likes to play and—despite her protestations—she plays to win. She is a master of pro baseball's technical aspects—contract dos and don'ts, the intricacies of waivers and collective bargaining. That's not sexy stuff, but it's crucial to being a successful general manager.

Where she may need to sharpen her skills is in the practical side of the game, especially talent evaluation. "That's the [illegible] that men always say sets us apart from

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL [illegible]


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like it's a gene," says Priscilla Oppenheimer, director of the San Diego Padres minor-league operation and a 22-year baseball veteran. "Kim's a go-getter, has strong ethics, is self-assured, and is an incredible arbitrator. I haven't heard she can't do that other stuff, but I haven't heard she can. That's where she will be under the microscope."

Ng can still get stopped by clubhouse guards at away games or be mistaken for an Asian player's interpreter. She has endured private slights that occasionally go public—most notoriously when New York Mets scout Bill Singer mocked her Chinese ancestry outside a hotel bar during the 2003 winter meetings in Phoenix. Ng, as was widely reported, downplayed the incident, but then-Dodgers GM Dan Evans and Yankees GM Brian Cashman complained and Singer was fired. What isn't well known is that Ng didn't just let others speak for her. A few days after the encounter, during a meeting between the Dodgers and the Mets, she told off Singer and his bosses. "You understood the real feelings that she had kept inside her," says somebody who was in the room. "I don't think anyone has ever made herself clearer than she did that day."

"I get underestimated quite a bit," says Ng. "It's because of my demeanor, size, race, and mostly because of being a woman. I've never claimed that I am going to change a lot of people's minds. But I hope that if people get to know me, they will get a different impression about what I can and can't do."

"Some people may underestimate Kim," says Dodger GM Paul DePodesta, "but it will only happen once."

I WAS A TOMBOY," NG SAYS, DESCRIBing her childhood in Terre Haute, Indiana, where she was born, and in Long Island, Queens, and Ridgewood, New Jersey, where she grew up. "I mean I wasn't one of the ones jumping rope." Instead she played stickball with the guys and tennis and softball in high school. Even though Queens was Mets territory she rooted for the Yankees because, she says, "the Yankees were winners and the Mets were losers." The eldest of five daughters, Ng watched her mother ignore a few gender barriers herself to pursue a career in banking. Her father was a financial analyst and a sports fan who kept his family on the ski slopes or the tennis court.

Ng attended the University of Chicago, where she studied economics and public policy and helped to anchor the infield for the Division III softball team. "I tried to play her where I thought the action would be," says her coach, Kimberly Vance. "She batted near the top of the order because she had good speed and even better game smarts." When asked if she was a "five-tool player"—slang for someone who can do it all—Ng shakes her head and says, "Not five," then can't help adding, "Well, four. I didn't have power."

After graduating with a public policy degree, Ng sought a job in finance. "Luckily," she says, "no one hired me." Then she heard the White Sox wanted an intern. Chicago had never brought in anyone like her. The club was doing a lot of things it hadn't done before, among them handling its own arbitration cases instead of using outside counsel. That required finding someone to help

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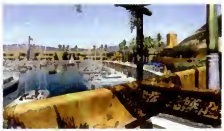
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do prep work. "As soon as I met her I wanted Kim," says Evans, then Chicago's director of baseball operations. "The interview was the most lopsided I've ever been in."

Ng believes another White Sox official, senior vice president Jack Gould, was not as easily convinced: "I could tell he was skeptical about me, as a woman, from the questions he asked." Once they worked together, Ng says, she tried to see where their strengths were complementary. For one thing, Gould was an advocate of computerizing baseball. "He ended up being one of my biggest supporters. You have to find people's comfort zone so they will trust you and not look at you as an outsider."

Evans thinks inexperience more than gender bothered Gould, who died in 2002. "After their first meeting, Jack told me he loved the fact that Kim was captain of her college team and that she understood the game," says Evans. "But he also had a lot of money invested in the team, and he was a decorated war vet from a generation that said you had to prove yourself. Here was this young intern who was going to be handling funds coming out of his wallet. That's what he cared about."

"I don't know if baseball is ready for a woman GM. I do know any woman GM would be under pressure all the time. Kim's tough enough to handle that."

Ng worked 11-hour days crunching data. A former intern himself, Evans wanted to accelerate her growth, so Ng also learned to figure out a payroll and negotiate a contract, sat in on bull sessions and high-level meetings, and charted pitches behind home plate. In return, she impressed people with ideas about how things could and should be done.

After a few months, Ng clinched a full-time position by challenging White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf during a meeting about candidates for arbitration, under which an independent panel resolves differences between a team and an eligible player. Reinsdorf had polled the room about a marginal prospect, then surprised everyone by asking Ng her opinion. She told him the group was wasting time and should focus on athletes who could help the club. When Reinsdorf resisted, Ng laid out her arguments.

"It was like being a spectator at a prizefight," says Evans. "Other people were thinking it, but the intern said it: 'Why are we here?' Jerry gave me a look that said, 'Now I see what you see in her.' That's when the little girl attained a different status."

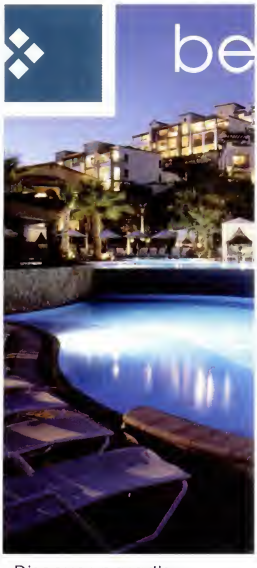
By the mid-'90s, Ng had moved beyond grunt work and was helping to shape team strategy. In 1996, she became the youngest person to present an arbitration case when she delivered the White Sox's arguments against star pitcher Alex Fernandez. Moving her to the main table raised lots of eyebrows, especially because Fernandez's agent was Scott Boras, who has been both hated and hailed for using hard-line tactics to redefine the free-agent market.

"I was extremely nervous," Ng says. "It showed in the first five minutes, in the way I presented. Then," she continues, lapsing into second person, which she often does, "as it wore on, your confidence builds and you forget about where you are and you get involved in the substance. You get into the zone." The arbiters ordered Fernandez to accept $650,000 less than he requested.

In 1997, Ng moved to the American League office as director of waivers and player records, a position that allowed her to study the rules—as well as the ways to get around them—and to see how 14 teams did business, instead of one. *Who made gut calls? Who knew how to finesse the fine print? How do you schmooze information out of friends as well as rivals or set up other people's deals to benefit your own?* "Baseball is a game of reputations and relationships," Ng says. "In that job I got to know people and they got to know me."

One man Ng talked with a lot was Cashman. When the Yankees assistant GM moved to the top spot, he asked her to be his number two. "Some other places want a superscout," he says. "I needed someone to replace what I was doing," which meant covering negotiations, arbitration, trades, and rule compliance. "You can lose a player based on a technicality," he says. "That's where your assistant GM is your safety net."

During Ng's four years in New York, the Yankees went to the World Series four times and won three championships. "Any success



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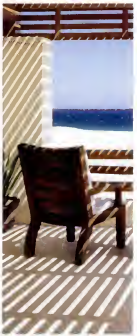
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I had, Kim shared in equally," says Cashman. "Any positive contribution—or negative—we were hand in hand."

The experience was glorious but exhausting. "What you learn with the Yankees is that you don't have an ego," Ng says. "The way it's structured, a lot of other people have input into what I did and what the GM does." The loudest voice, of course, belonged to George Steinbrenner. Ng tried to help Cashman stay a step ahead of the Yankees' mercurial owner. "This is a unique environment," says Cashman. "I had told Kim that working here is like going to Vietnam, in the sense that you can go to boot camp and prepare, but once you get off the helicopter you say, 'I know what they told me, but this is not what I expected.' If you're not ready to work 24/7, to be an indentured servant—that kind of commitment—this is not for you. Kim chose to take that step. She learned a lot. But she has ultimate desires, and when she left she was ready to expand beyond what she was doing here."

After her contract with the Yankees expired in 2001, Ng took time off to ponder the future. She and her husband, Tony Markward, a public policy writer she had met in college, went traveling. When she returned home, she found her answering machine filled with messages from Evans, who had just been named the Dodgers' general manager. He had inherited a payroll saddled with expensive long-term contracts and a team mired in mediocrity.

As assistant GM and a vice president, Ng was given more authority than she had in New York. Almost as soon as she arrived, she was making deals, among them the signing of Japanese pitcher Kazuhisa Ishii. After Bill Bavasi left to run the Seattle Mariners, she continued the rebuilding of the farm system. She and Evans took turns traveling with the team. "When you're on the road, part of the job is being a shoulder to cry on and part of the job is being the grim reaper," Evans says. "For instance, Kim had to learn to deliver bad news to players who were traded, sent down, or let go while they were out of town."

Evans was criticized for refusing to sacrifice his tradable players to give the roster pop. "A lot of people are into gratification now," Ng says. "They want the major-league team to win. We were able to balance the tightrope pretty well. We contended each year. And we got to the play-offs this past year while



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Above: Master of the Murano Gradual, *Initial G: Saint Blaise*; probably Venice, about 1450–1460. Collection: J. Paul Getty Museum.

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This six-part film series spans two weekends with films exploring the life and times of Napoleon Bonaparte. Presented in partnership with the UCLA Film and Television Archive.

Fri, Mar 4, 7:30 pm, *Napoleon*
(1927, Abel Grance)

Sat, Mar 6, 7:30 pm, *Conquest*
(1937, Clarence Brown)



Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

Sun, Mar 6, 3 pm, *Desiree*
(1954, Henry Koster)

Fri, Mar 11, 7:30 pm, *The Duellists*
(1977, Ridley Scott)

Sat, Mar 12, 7:30 pm, *Waterloo*
(1970, Sergei Bondarchuk)

Sun, Mar 13, 3 pm, *The Emperor's New Clothes*
(2001, Alan Taylor)

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Members of Zendeko Taiko. Photo: Aaron Paley

Talks & Tours

VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIEVAL AGES

Wed, Mar 2, 4 pm
Harold M. Williams Auditorium

Michael Wood, best-selling author, noted historian, and documentarian, discusses the theme of violence in the Middle Ages. Complements the exhibition *Images of Violence in the Medieval World*.

WORKS IN PROGRESS SERIES

Fri, Mar 4, 2 pm
Research Institute Lecture Hall

Kaja Silverman, class of 1940 and professor of rhetoric and film, University of California, Berkeley, discusses works in progress in art history and the humanities, followed by a roundtable discussion. The discussant is George Baker, assistant professor of art history, University of California, Los Angeles. Call 310.440.7300 for reservations.

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IMAGES OF VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

Fri, Mar 4, 3 pm

Elizabeth Morrison, associate curator of manuscripts, gives a one-hour talk on the exhibition. Meet under the stairs in the Museum Entrance Hall.



The Boucicaut Master, *The Death of the Roman Consul Marcus Atilius Regulus*, Giovanni Boccaccio, *On the Lives of Illustrious Men and Women*: Paris, about 1415. Collection: J. Paul Getty Museum

POINT-OF-VIEW: LEO BRAUDY

Fri, Mar 4, 6 and 7:30 pm
Museum Galleries

Leo Braudy, author of *Frenzy of Renown and Its History* and professor of English, University of Southern California, discusses heroes and fame in relation to the exhibition *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile*. Sign up at the Museum Information Desk beginning at 4:30 pm the day of the program.

THE ANGER OF ACHILLES: HOW DAVID REINVENTED TRAGIC HISTORY PAINTING IN EXILE

Thurs, Mar 10, 7 pm
Harold M. Williams Auditorium

Thomas Crow, director, Getty Research Institute, discusses Jacques-Louis David, who made his reputation as a painter of grand public canvases that dramatized tragic conflicts on a scale that competed with the theatrical stage. Complements the exhibition *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile*.

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JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID: EMPIRE TO EXILE

Thurs, Mar 17, 1:30 pm

Scott Shaefer, Jon Seydl, and Charlotte Eyerman, department of paintings and curators of the exhibition *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile*, lead a gallery talk on the exhibition. Meet under the stairs in the Museum Entrance Hall.

PANELED ROOMS: MUSEUM OBJECTS OR "LIFE-STYLE ENVIRONMENTS"?

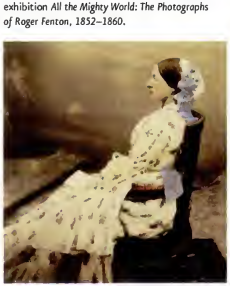
Thurs, Mar 17, 7 pm
Harold M. Williams Auditorium

Brian Considine, decorative arts conservator at the J. Paul Getty Museum, looks at the installation of paneled rooms in American and European museums and addresses their authenticity, conservation, and meaning. Presented by the Conservation Institute as part of its *Conservation Matters* lecture series. Call 310.440.7300 for reservations.

TRAVELING WITH FENTON

Sun, Mar 20, 4 pm
Harold M. Williams Auditorium

Gordon Baldwin, associate curator of photographs, the J. Paul Getty Museum, discusses Roger Fenton, one of the most celebrated and influential artists in England during photography's golden age of the 1850s. Complements the exhibition *All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852–1860*.



Roger Fenton, *Queen Victoria*, 1854. Collection: J. Paul Getty Museum.

SOUND AND SPACE IN THE ROTHKO CHAPEL

Wed, Mar 23, 7:30 pm
Harold M. Williams Auditorium



Young Riddle, music director, the Nimbus Ensemble. Photo: Lucia Sullivan, 2003

Research Institute Director Thomas Crow discusses how the Abstract Expressionist painters, particularly Mark Rothko, inspired Morton Feldman's practice as a composer. The Nimbus Ensemble performs Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* along with several other works.

JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID: COURT ARTIST TO NAPOLEON

Thurs, Mar 24, 7 pm
Harold M. Williams Auditorium

Phillipe Bordes, professor of history of art, University of Lyon 2, and guest curator of the exhibition *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile*, discusses the exhibition. A number of little-known projects by David in the decorative arts will also be highlighted.

Looking Ahead

Performing Arts

FRIDAY NIGHTS AT THE GETTY

Sarah Lee Guthrie & Johnny Irion
Fri, Apr 1, 7:30 pm
Harold M. Williams Auditorium



Sarah Lee Guthrie and Jeremy Irion. Photo: Michael Wilson

SOUNDS OF L.A.

Marta Gomez
Sat, Apr 9, 7 pm,
Harold M. Williams Auditorium

Reservations for all events listed above available Mar 24, 9 am



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achieving some of the goals Dan had set."

In late 2003, after a series of false starts, the Dodgers owner, News Corp., made clear it was going to sell the club to Boston investors Frank and Jamie McCourt. Because of financing questions, the deal dragged on, leaving Evans and Ng in limbo. The McCourts bought the team in early 2004 and replaced Evans with DePodesta, then assistant GM of the Oakland Athletics. The good news was that DePodesta was an architect of Moneyball, which had been pioneered by the A's and popularized by journalist Michael Lewis. The bad news was that he was known to have a right-hand man that many presumed he'd bring along.

"This was the first time I had been involved in a transition," Ng says. "I'd be fooling myself if I said I wasn't nervous. The optimistic side of me said, 'You have eight or nine months to prove yourself before your contract ends. Do good or you will be gone. In fact, you *should* be gone.'"

On DePodesta's first day Ng told him he needed to figure out if he liked how she did things and she needed to figure out how she felt, too. Soon after their meeting she went off to oversee the high-profile arbitration case involving closer Eric Gagné, who had just completed two stellar seasons and was expecting to be duly rewarded. (Ng came through for management: Gagné received a one-year deal for $5 million, which was $3 million short of what he wanted.)

DePodesta says he had no trouble making up his mind about Ng, calling her "bright, dedicated, loyal, and tough." He was pleased that she took her name out of consideration for a job with the Mets even before her fate in L.A. was set. She was "strong-minded, composed, and fearless" when he made a series of controversial summer trades that sent away crucial middle reliever Guillermo Mota and club favorites Paul Lo Duca and Dave Roberts. Ng was "the glue of the baseball operation." He signed her to a multiyear contract after the season's end in October.

That ending was bittersweet. Ng watched the Dodgers win the National League West, then get whacked by the St. Louis Cardinals. The club's first play-off appearance since 1996 partially validated both her ousted friend and her new boss.

Ng is seen as being more of a presence now than she was under Evans, her straight-ahead style having impressed those who work closely with her. Ng also wonders if it's a matter of perception. While Evans was definitely her mentor, she shares similarities with DePodesta, who is a quiet, computer-savvy Harvard economics grad even younger—by four years—than she is. "Because we were together so long, when people saw me and Dan they'd say, 'Dependent,'" Ng says. "When they see me and Paul they say, 'Independent.'"

NG MAY WELCOME A LITTLE distance between herself and DePodesta. Over the winter he has scrambled the roster, drawing flak from fans and the media. Undeterred, Ng has focused on executing what she and DePodesta refer to as the Plan. Even during what she called her "quiet time," the early Decem-



ber days leading up to the annual winter meetings in Anaheim, she was up early, out late, and on the phone in between. One drizzly morning Ng did pause for breakfast at a French café near her Silver Lake home. She ordered poached eggs, an attempt to do better than her typical diet of "fluorescent food usually sold in gas stations."

Living on Munchos is an occupational hazard, as is going for days without seeing the sun. At the Anaheim Marriott, Ng was holed up in rooms, occasionally escaping for swings through the lobby to chat with or be chatted up by other execs, scouts, and agents. Aside from a few wives, she often was the only woman around, presuming you didn't count the showgirls accompanying the mayor of Las Vegas, who was courting a franchise for his city.

So far L.A. has ended up with what many consider a wash, at best, in terms of talent and salaries. The Dodgers signed Boston pitcher Derek Lowe, re-signed Odalis Perez and Brad Penny, and gave Gagné a multiyear package. They brought in Atlanta outfielder J.D. Drew and Houston infielder Jeff Kent while losing stalwart slugger Shawn Green and breakout star Adrian Beltre.

Several people close to Ng say they can't imagine she's happy with all the personnel moves. "There are difficult points during an off-season when you are not happy because things don't go as planned," Ng says. "You're not happy, for instance, that you didn't get Beltre—that you didn't retain your guy. But at the end of it I think we're very happy. We shored up our pitching—and while people say our defense has gone down, we feel that in the outfield it got better."

Will Ng ever get to run her own team?

"All that Kim needs is an owner/organization that is open-minded enough to hire her," says DePodesta. "She is as prepared for the role as many of the candidates out there."

On the record, almost everybody says Ng has a shot. However, some believe that that shot won't come for a while. "I don't know if baseball is ready for a woman GM," says Oppenheimer. "I do know any woman GM would be under pressure all the time. Kim's tough enough to handle that."

Off the record, many say that besides gaining practical experience Ng must find an organization that is comfortable with her. Gender will be a factor, but more important, GMs are picked by idiosyncratic owners who don't like taking chances.

"My assumption is that Kim is advancing into that core level of skills, like player analysis," says Scott Boras, who says he and Ng have a good relationship because "she's always prepared and she knows I am, too." If he were advising her, he says, he would emphasize that a number of GMs haven't played the game. They have combined brain power and information from a field-tested staff. "If they can do it," Boras says, "why can't Kim Ng?"

Ng declines to discuss her chances of moving up. "A lot of things go into being a GM," she says. Talent evaluation. Managing people. Foresight. Leadership. The ability to listen. "Most important," says Ng, "you have to have the courage to do the right thing. The scrutiny can be brutal. I've seen what it's like. You have to love your job to go through all that." LA



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3rd Annual

Southern California Design 2005

ANNUAL REPORT: LOCAL COMPANIES OFFER THEIR TAKE ON CREATIVITY, DESIGN PHILOSOPHY, AND DOING BUSINESS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

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Taryn Rose

Company Profile:



Taryn Rose changed the footwear industry in 1998 by creating a line of beautiful luxury shoes that pamper the foot. Her idea of being well dressed with a sense of well being touched a nerve with fashionable men and women from coast to coast, creating a dedicated following for her footwear collection.

Design Inspiration:

Formally trained as an orthopedic surgeon, Rose wanted to prevent the problems she saw in her patients as a result of years of wearing ill-fitting footwear by creating a line where fashion is balanced with function. With her love of designer fashion and acute sense of style, Rose created her collection using the most luxurious materials available and crafted the line to be worn with the finest clothing. The shoes are made by highly skilled artisans in Italy, with almost three hours of hand labor in each pair.

Southern California Influence:

Taryn Rose is proud to call Los Angeles home far over 24 years. She regards Los Angeles as the perfect setting to truly develop this global brand with influences from all cultures of the world. From the glamour of Beverly Hills, to the commerce of downtown LA, there are always inspirations to design for living with style and ease. Los Angeles has plenty of red carpets and black tie events but most of its inhabitants live in jeans. Rose designs her collections to be versatile enough to meet the diverse, chic lifestyles of these trendsetters.

Store Locations:

Beverly Hills
9536 Brighton Way
Beverly Hills, CA 90210
(310) 273-5331

New York City
30 E. 60th Street, Ground Level
New York, NY 10022
(212) 753-3939

The Forum Shops at Caesars
3500 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Suite R40
Las Vegas, NV 89109
(702) 732-2712

Santana Row
333 Santana Row, Suite 1105
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Ambrosia

Company Profile:



Ambrosia Audio and Video Inc. is the leading home integration company in Southern California. Ambrosia is serious about quality and performance, and it is reflected in all of our efforts. Ambrosia was founded in1991 as an audiophile haven. Now Ambrosia displays and supports some of the best products and services available including automotion, home design, WiFi (wired or wireless home networking), HDTV, satellite, distribution systems, lighting, custom cabinets, sound treatments, power conditioners, and accessories. Our ultimate goal is simple: to make our customer a satisfied one.

Design Inspiration:

With one of our showrooms located in the heart of the Avenues of Art & Design district, we collaborate with some of the most prestigious design, construction, and architectural firms in Southern California. We offer theaters designed by Theo Kalomirakis and Scott Myklebust. We work with a few select local but world-famous design firms such as Felicia Bushman, Hermosillo and Ross, and Phyllis Morris. Our partner contractors include Kavin Constructions, Behr, Fort Hill, and more.

Southern California Influence:

We do not sell something you need but rather, something you want. As Californians, we know that what you like most is outdoor music and video entertainment. Through collaboration with the world-renowned Southern Californian manufacturer, Sonance, we offer some of the best environmental speaker systems available. As a result, this year we have been selected to outfit the technology components for the Pasadena Showcase House which will feature Sonance indoor and outdoor speakers. We pride ourselves in carrying lines from California-based companies that include, among others: Kaleidescape, Parasound, Harmonic Tech, Velodyne, Stewart Filmscreen, and Revel.

Store Locations:

Bel Air
2337 Roscomare Road
Bel Air, CA 90077
(310) 440-5522

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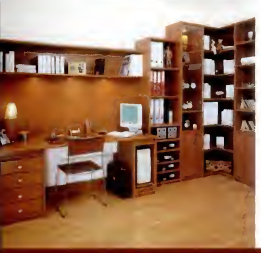
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Company Profile:


Andrea Sipe, Design/Sales Manager

A luxurious walk-in closet is just as important as the fine furniture throughout your home. Starting the day in a beautiful, functional space can brighten your mood. After much success in Europe, Doorset decided to bring over 20 years of professional experience in custom-made closets to Southern California. Working one-on-one with clients in their homes and in the inspiring Beverly Hills showroom, they give customers exactly what they want and offer outrageous personal service! From the second you step into the showroom you will be struck by unique design ideas, combinations, and solutions.

Design Inspiration:

The company draws inspiration from Asian, European, and American design trends, searching worldwide to bring you the best of all. The custom designs combine years of experience with each client's individual needs and style to create a space that is beautiful, simple, clean, and clutter free.

Southern California Influence:

Surrounded by raw natural beauty and a huge influx of artistic talent, Doorset's custom designs include hints of both. Rich woods and colored glass remind us of Los Angeles' awesome sunsets and natural beauty. The functional, unique designs meet the needs of Doorset's stylish clientele. Pioneering closet design, they can show you exactly how your space will look and even take you on a virtual walk-through in 3D. Award winning and unique, Doorset fits into the wide range of Southern California home styles.

Showroom Location:

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www.doorset-closet.com
andrea@doorset-closet.com

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Perrell Fine Art

Company Profile:



Perrell Fine Art is the exclusive agent to many artists throughout the United States, Europe, and Australia. We specialize in residential, corporate, and hospitality artwork. We work nationwide with designers, art directors, art consultants to the trade, and the general public. Our Los Angeles headquarters functions as our national home base. PFA owner, Marty Perrell, is dedicated to creating long-term relationships with both artists and clientele.

Design Inspiration:

Immersed in the design community, we are continually inspired by designers who bring us into their projects with their unique visions. From transitional to contemporary, our direction flows with the aesthetic of this community and is mirrored by the visions of our many talented and progressive artists.

Southern California Influence:

The diversity of design and architecture in Southern California drives the imagery and creativity of PFA. The region is filled with exceptionally talented designers and art directors who consistently set bold new trends and create exciting inspiration. We are constantly evolving with our large inventory of works on canvas, paper, and metals. This allows us fill the needs of this vast market and reflect the sophistication and style of the Southern California spirit.

Store Locations:

145 North La Brea – e
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Arte De Mexico



Company Profile:

Los Angeles' most exclusive designers have long relied upon this design showcase for its unique furnishings, unrivaled personal, friendly service and unique custom capabilities, and you certainly can, too. From the moment you enter an Arte showroom, you'll find yourself transported to another world. Visit the Arte showrooms and be prepared for an intoxicating feast for the eyes...and for your home!



David Steffers,
Vice President and Sales Director

Design Inspiration:

For decades Arte has traveled its own path throughout the world to bring extraordinary creations to light. The vast collection includes everything from hand-forged wrought iron and hand-carved wooden lighting, sure to set the perfect tone for any new addition, to an array of antique doors that provide the perfect finishing touch: a stunning entrance to a private oasis.

Southern California Influence:

Like the city itself, the best Los Angeles design offers a vibrant blend of creativity, culture, and craft from the farthest reaches of the world. This same rich diversity is the hallmark of the city's ultimate interior design resource, Arte International Furnishings. Turn a corner and you're suddenly in the heart of a Moroccan den, chandeliers bathing you in warm prismatic colors. Another direction leads to rooms bursting with hand-painted furniture, each piece exhibiting a timeless old-world charm. And there are so many other galleries still to explore, taking you to parts unimagined.

Showroom Locations:

Los Angeles – ARTE de Mexico
5356 Riverton Avenue, North Hollywood, CA 91601
(818) 769-5090
Open daily: Mon-Sat, 8:30am - 5:30pm; Sun, 10:00am - 5:30pm

Orange County – ARTE International Furnishings
17092 Pullman Street, Irvine, CA 92614
(949) 660-1200
Hours: Tue-Sun, 10:00am - 6:00pm (Closed Mondays)

www.arteshowrooms.com • www.artedemexico.com

Las Vegas – Villa Reale
The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace
3500 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, NV 89109
(702) 456-1027
Open daily: 10:00am - 11:00pm
www.villa-reale.com

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BY EMILY YOUNG STILL LIFES BY VICTOR SCHRAGER



SWELL DECOR: Itolion leother, chrome, and fur ore the drow ot Minotti Los Angeles (left); Blockmon Cruz revels in one-of-o-kind pieces (right); Bountiful speciolizes in furnishings with distressed painted finishes (below)

FURNITURE

BERBERE WORLD IMPORTS This somewhat dusty warehouse brings to mind scenes from *Citizen Kane*. Picture row upon row of handcrafted ethnic imports from 18 countries, including China, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Morocco, and Pakistan. In addition to the expected tables, chairs, and benches, you'll discover a scavenger's paradise of vintage and antique doors, trunks, statuary, baskets, rugs, mirrors, and large-scale planters—everything, possibly, except a sled named Rosebud. *3049 S. La Cienega Blvd., Culver City, 310-842-3842 or www.berbereimports.com.*

BLACKMAN CRUZ Proprietors Adam Blackman and David Cruz recently designed a line of their own furniture as eccentric as the vintage and antique treasures they buy and sell. So while you can still find a six-foot English clock face or an early-19th-century French anatomical model here, you can also revel in Blackman Cruz ottomans with hippo feet, consoles with horse legs, serpent andirons, and more, all locally crafted from luxe materials. Bronze piranhas, anyone? *800 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A., 310-657-9228 or www.blockmancruz.com.*

BOUNTIFUL Browsing through Sue Balmforth's huge inventory of antique and vintage painted furniture is like crawling around in your grandparents' attic—you never know what you're going to come across, but you can bet it'll evoke a yearning for days gone by. Almost everything—distressed-wood tables, wicker settees, mirrored armoires, porcelain sinks—has been left as it was found on buying trips throughout the United States, France, and Italy. Milk glass and jadeite dishes, lace tablecloths, and homespun linen towels complete the look. *1335 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice, 310-450-3620 or www.bountifulhome.com.*

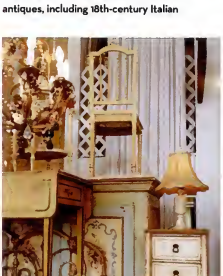
DESIGN WITHIN REACH Tempted by the sharp designer sofas and chairs you've seen online or in the catalog but wondering if they feel as good as they look? DWR showrooms let you test-drive before you buy. Just don't expect to haul anything home; all merchandise—except the occasional discontinued floor sample—must be ordered and shipped. *8070 Beverly Blvd., L.A., 323-653-3923; 9647 Brighton Way, Beverly Hills, 310-247-8030; 332A Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, 310-899-6000; 60 W. Green St., Pasadena, 626-432-6700; 401 Newport Center Dr., Ste. A101, Newport Beach, 949-721-0031; or www.dwr.com.*

DIVA If Marcello Mastroianni were alive today, he'd feel right at home among the B&B Italia and Maxalto furnishings showcased here. Especially suave and sophisticated are the Athos table, designed by Paolo Piva, and the Charles sofa and Domus storage system, both by Antonio Citterio. The look is spare, of course, but not so spartan that you wouldn't also want to spring for some of the Salviati glassware, Venini vases, or Kasthall rugs. *8801 Beverly Blvd., L.A., 310-278-3191 or www.divofurniture.com.*

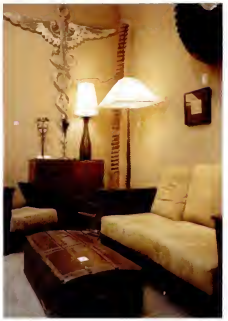
DOS GALLOS This tidy warehouse off the beaten track contains stacks of 18th- and 19th-century cedar and cypress furniture primarily from Guatemala, Honduras, and Spain. The hand-hewn styles, some of them painted, are great for adding rustic warmth to bungalows and mansions alike. Finishing touches include wrought-iron chandeliers, copper pots, ceramic dishes, and mohair throws. Don't miss the towering mangrove floor lamps with silk, hide, or beaded shades. *924 N. Formosa Ave., L.A., 323-851-9117 or www.dosgallos.com.*

GEORGE SMITH In early-19th-century England, long before foam rubber, fiberglass, and injection-molded plastic revolutionized the industry, noted cabinetmaker George Smith built upholstered furniture by hand, using wood, coil springs, and down. Today his company's L.A. showroom offers traditional designs based on its founder's original patterns, such as stately scroll-arm sofas, wing chairs, and tufted ottomans. You can ask for contemporary and custom designs, too—with or without the casters and nailheads. *142 N. Robertson Blvd., L.A., 310-360-0880 or www.georgesmith.com.*

HOLLYHOCK Interior designer Suzanne Rheinstein is a consummate mixmaster, providing all the ingredients for elegant living spaces at her inviting shop. Choose from antiques, including 18th-century Italian



STILL LIFE STYLIST: PHILIPPA BRATHWAITE; PHOTOS: KATHLEEN CLARK



commodes and 19th-century English secretaries, or new treasures, such as *faux bois* benches and Tony Duquette–inspired rock crystal votive holders. Other specialties are William Yeoward hand-cut crystal stemware from London and home and garden books, both out of print and fresh off the presses. *817 Hilldale Ave., West Hollywood, 310-777-0100 or www.hollyhockinc.com.*

IN-EX Architect Ali Alam builds maybe one project a year. The rest of the time he spends at his furniture showrooms, making high-end European brands more accessible to Southern Californians. Sixty-five percent of the prestigious lines are Italian (Molteni, Moroso, Poltrona Frau), but there are also collections from Germany (Walter Knoll), the Netherlands, Belgium, and Switzerland. At the newer, larger Beverly Hills location, you can view sleek Agape bathrooms and Dada kitchens. *8800 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, 310-358-0500; 1431B Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, 310-393-4948; or www.inexsite.com.*

MINOTTI LOS ANGELES The first freestanding Minotti-only showroom in the world just might be the sexiest furniture store in town. It sports dark-paneled walls and white floors that all but disappear behind luxurious low-slung furnishings in neutral leather and fabric, polished chrome, and smoked glass. Any of the understated sofas, chairs, coffee tables, and padded platform beds would qualify as a home improvement. Ditto the lamps by Venini, chandeliers by Lolli e Memmoli, bedding by Osvaldo Santi, and silk-screened celebrity mug shots by artist Russell Young. *8936 Beverly Blvd., L.A., 310-278-6851 or www.minotti.com.*

Antique Chic

Something Old Lends New Rooms Historical Drama

NOTHING AGAINST MOLDED FIBERGLASS CHAIRS, SUNBURST WALL CLOCKS, AND OTHER bona fide classics from the '40s, '50s, and '60s, but enough with midcentury modernism already. Why not reach way back for the designs, materials, and workmanship that have stood an even longer test of time?

For 50 years **RICHARD GOULD ANTIQUES** has been a dependable source of traditional 18th- and 19th-century English and American furniture and decorative arts, in addition to Chinese export porcelain. A family business now run by the second generation, the shop has a wide selection of mahogany breakfronts, sideboards, and other dining room pieces. It also showcases silver tableware from San Francisco–based Argentum—The Leopard's Head.

JOHN J. NELSON ANTIQUES, another longtime L.A. dealer, has three spaces on the same street featuring opulent European furniture, accessories, and chandeliers from the 17th century on. French (Louis XIII to Louis XVI) seating, consoles, and cabinets share space with equally formal items from Italy and England.

More affordable English, French, and Italian finds are the specialty at San Juan Capistrano's **LEE STANTON ANTIQUES**, which opened a Los Angeles outpost last year. The inventory consists of timeless favorites such as Edwardian sofas, Directoire buffets, and Venetian tapestries from the 18th through the 20th century. Garden ornaments include urns, finials, and staddle stones.

At 20-year-old **NATHAN TURNER**, the peeling paint, nicks, and dings only enhance the appeal of this homey shop's casual European antiques. Choose painted rustic furniture from France and Italy, kilims from Turkey, or lamps made from weathered architectural elements.

The simple lines and soft colors of Swedish furniture get top billing at **LIEF**, where the showroom spans 400 years. Housed in an enormous former textile-dyeing factory are baroque, rococo, and Gustavian pieces direct from Sweden and attractively displayed with contemporary Finnish and French art.

URBAN COUNTRY, launched in 2002, satisfies the demand for good ol' Americana, whether it was homespun on the farm or factory-made in the big city. Most of the collectibles—folk art, handmade quilts, carnival games, battleship models, store signs—have been plucked from the East, Midwest, and South.

Richard Gould Antiques, 808 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A., 310-657-9416 or www.richardgouldantiques.com. John J. Nelson Antiques, 8472 Melrose Pl., L.A., 323-655-3685. Lee Stanton Antiques, 769 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A., 310-855-9800; 31531 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, 949-240-5181; or www.leestanton.com. Nathan Turner, 636 N. Almont Dr., L.A., 310-275-1209 or www.nathanturner.com. Lief, 646 N. Almont Dr., L.A., 310-492-0033. Urban Country, 218 Main St., Venice, 310-315-1927 or www.urbancountryantiques.com. —E.Y.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY **ROSS MACDONALD**







MODERNICA Frank and Jay Novak manufacture and sell reproductions of Case Study-era classics so accurate that even experts have a hard time telling which pieces are replicas. Though the brothers don't bill their furniture as the real thing, students of design will recognize the distinctive shapes made famous by Charles and Ray Eames, Vladimir Kagan, Isamu Noguchi, Pierre Paulin, Florence Knoll, and others. Prices aren't cheap but reflect the difference between investing in the genuine article and settling for the next best thing. *7366 Beverly Blvd., L.A., 323-933-0383 or www.modernica.net.*

MODERN LIVING For 18 years, entertainment types and other affluent Angelenos with a thing for Italian minimalism have gotten their fix here. The store offers innovative contemporary furniture from Porro, Living Divani, and Zanotta, among others, with lighting from Foscarini and art glass from Arcade. But the main attraction is Cassina, whose line of classic furnishings features a who's who of design and architecture. Newer selections include Philippe Starck's tech-savvy M.I.S.S. sofa, which comes with built-in speakers and subwoofer. *8775 Beverly Blvd., L.A., 310-657-8775 or www.modernliving.com.*

SONRISA FURNITURE This is the place for heavy metal—industrial furnishings, that is. You'll find steel, aluminum, and stainless steel chairs, tables, desks, bookcases, medical cabinets, and more. Some are new, with a few pieces still made by Norwalk-based McDowell-Craig; others are out-of-production items that once equipped America's factories, hospitals, and military bases and have the patina to show for it. *7609 Beverly Blvd., L.A., 323-935-8438 or www.sonrisafurniture.com.*

YOLK Two years ago Melanie Miller opened this small storefront to promote emerging furniture makers because, as her slogan goes, "New design is hatching all the time." There are deceptively simple benches, beds, and tables from San Francisco, New York, and Canada, but the laminated bent plywood Yoga Lounge chair and Caballo rocking horse are Miller's own. Cool-looking pillows, dishes, and kitchenware are sprinkled throughout. *1626 Silver Lake Blvd., L.A., 323-660-4315 or www.yolk-la.com.*

ACCESSORIES

FITZSU SOCIETY When only a sleek modernist vase, bowl, tray, or clock will do, try shopping Fitz and Su Sazama's well-edited, handsomely displayed collection of classic and contemporary designer housewares. The emphasis is on glass and stainless steel, with touches of wood, porcelain, and plastic. Boldface names include Alvar Aalto, Marc Newson, Jasper Morrison, Alessi, iittala, and Furstenburg. *7970 Melrose Ave., L.A., 323-655-1908; 65 W. Green St., Pasadena, 626-564-1908; or www.fitzsu.com.*

HOMEWORK Laser Rosenberg, who started small on Highland Avenue, has moved to larger digs. But he's remained true to his roots, offering the latest home designs in a palette of soothing colors inspired by nature. While Rosenberg supports locals such as Cambioform (case goods), Neikko (enameled copper mobiles), and Yarrow Hock (oils on canvas), he also spotlights work from farther afield, such as New Hampshire (Peter Sandback's pigmented concrete tables) and Germany (e15's oak and walnut furniture). *139 S. La Brea Ave., L.A., 323-936-6139 or www.homeworkbrand.com.*

IGE Designer Helene Ige opened her doors last year ostensibly to sell her laser-cut laminate-top tables, which come in two patterns: the

TABLE MANORS: **Tortoise showcases unusual Japanese crafts (above); Zelen focuses on vintage dishes and glassware (below)**



KATHLEEN CLARK



Damage Control

Give Them Your Chipped, Your Torn, Your Broken Masses

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN, AND EVEN NORMAL WEAR AND TEAR CAN LEAVE YOUR FURNITURE, accessories, and art battered, shattered, and tattered. Fret not. Skilled craftspeople know how to make your treasures—museum-quality antiques or tchotchkes with sentimental value—look as good as new. Most provide free estimates, but beware: Depending on repair time and degree of difficulty, you could shell out more to fix something than you did to buy it.

When it comes to wood furnishings, statues, cabinetry, and paneling, **JOSEPH P. REARDON ANTIQUE RESTORATION** can match virtually any stain or finish and specializes in the laborious process known as French polishing. Have Reardon visit your home to mend water damage, scratches, fading, and loose joints or veneers. Or take your chair, table, or dresser to **SUNVIEW FINISHING**, known not only for excellent chinoiserie painting but for a host of stains, lacquers, and crackle and antiqued finishes as well as silver and gold leafing.

Should a tipsy party guest or overzealous housekeeper break a vase, wineglass, platter, figurine, or other object made of crystal, porcelain, ceramic, jade, or marble, **RICHARD AND DONNA KLEIN ART RESTORATION** can help. The Kleins perform "plaster surgery" on chips, cracks, and much worse at their home studio. Though they often work with film studios and prop houses, most of their customers are individuals. The same goes for Geoff Brookes and Elena Horowitz-Brookes of **BROOKES RESTORATIONS**, whose clients include collectors large and small. At two shops they work their magic on everything from pre-Columbian art to Baccarat, Limoges, Wedgwood, you name it.



Lighting is the forte at **REBORN ANTIQUES**, where Marc Dierickx and Victor Hernandez rewire all types of fixtures except halogen. For chandeliers, they repair and replace crystals, candle sleeves, and chains. For lamps, they fashion shades of all shapes from paper, silk, and linen. They can also have parts handblown in glass or cast in metal.

CLASSIC DESIGN, upholsterer of gallery walls and seating at the Getty Center, patches and recovers sofas and chairs that are ripped, stained, burned, or threadbare. Raoul Benassaya and son Julien handle Louis XVI brocade fauteuils as adeptly as midcentury leather designs by Herman Miller and Knoll.

Joseph P. Reardon Antique Restoration, 626-355-1840 (by appointment). Sunview Finishing, 1325 S. La Brea Ave., L.A., 323-954-9263. Richard and Donna Klein Art Restoration, 323-469-1872 (by appointment). Brookes Restorations, 7410-12 Beverly Blvd., L.A., 310-659-8253; 28914 Roadside Dr., Ste. 5, Agoura Hills, 818-889-5232; or www.brookesrestorations.com. Reborn Antiques, 853 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A., 310-360-6320. Classic Design, 19771 Magellan Dr., Torrance, 310-324-1600 or www.classicdesignla.com. –E.Y.

geometric Op Art and the floral Chinois. But the rest of her airy storefront is devoted to quirky home accessories that occasionally prompt customers to ask, "What is it?" Among the more unusual items are latex balloon sculptures from England, smoked *kiri* wood trivets, and decorative shelves made of petrified mushrooms. *7382 Beverly Blvd., L.A., 323-939-2788 or www.igedesign.com.*

MECOX GARDENS This cozy year-old store is the West Coast spin-off of shops in Southampton, East Hampton, New York City, and Palm Beach. It features new, vintage, and antique furniture and decorative accents that blur the line between house and garden. In addition to mercury-glass gazing globes, iron armillaries, and moss topiaries, there are loads of mood-setting scented candles and photo-heavy design books from which to draw inspiration. *919 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A., 310-358-9272 or www.mecoxgardens.com.*

OK This shop has always been a reliable source for what owner Larry Schaffer calls "clean, modern, technique-driven" American art glass. Look for handblown pieces in muted natural colors by Caleb Siemon of Orange County, Bill Burch of Oakland, and Lynn Read of Portland. For the ceramics connoisseur, there are midcentury classics from Heath Ceramics of Sausalito and new studio pottery from Adam Silverman's Atwater Pottery on Glendale Boulevard. *8303 W. 3rd St., L.A., 323-653-3501.*

PAT MCGANN ANTIQUES Dealer Pat McGann's first love was textiles, so little wonder that her eclectic shop always carries a captivating array of new and vintage throws and pillows. Particularly striking are designer Neeru Kumar's contemporary fringed throws, which are hand-loomed in India out of Tussar silk and wool. Toss one of these earth-toned beauties on the bed, or better yet, wear it as a wrap. For colder weather, snuggle up in a supersoft Italian cashmere-and-silk throw trimmed in suede. *746 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A., 310-657-8708.*

POMP HOME Over the past year and a half, Warren Doke and Guenter Frivert have created a lively new home furnishings business just off Venice Boulevard. The focus is on simple lines and shapes warmed by lavish colors and bold patterns. While dishes from Poland's Panek Tobin and Germany's ASA make fashionable additions to the dining table, Amenity and Plush Living (both Southern California firms) offer 400-thread-count linens and silk pillows to brighten the bedroom and living room. *3806 Main St., Culver City, 310-287-9944 or www.pomphome.com.*

KATHLEEN CLARK



KNOCK KNOCK: Liz's Antique Hardware has scores of salvaged metal fittings for doors

TORTOISE In 2003, Tokyo transplants Taku and Keiko Shinomoto began selling handmade objects that marry traditional Japanese crafts and modern design. Some of the wares they import from their homeland, like the cast-iron teapots and Isamu Noguchi paper lamps, are familiar. Others, like the delicate bent cedar bowls and folded plastic vases, seem fresh and new. Check out the flatware and tea sets by Sori Yanagi (of Butterfly Stool fame) and in the back room, the zebrawood furniture by co-owner Taku, a former designer for the Japanese interiors giant Idée. *1208 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice, 310-314-8448 or www.tortoiselife.com.*

ZELEN This tiny two-story shop opened last spring to showcase owner Dan Zelen's taste for vintage dishes and barware. But not everything is old. Nova Scotian ceramic bowls that resemble mussel and sea urchin shells serve as whimsical counterpoints to more straightforward pieces carved from wood or stone. Zelen, a graphic artist and window-dresser-about-town, also sells some of his own handiwork, including cards for letterpress maven Claudia Laub and bejeweled martini picks. *8055 Beverly Blvd., L.A., 323-658-6756.*

HARDWARE

CROWN CITY HARDWARE Head for the back counter of this 89-year-old landmark, where the staff has 70 years of collective experience and is happy to talk knobs, pulls, hooks, hinges, locks, and latches in styles as disparate as mission, Tudor, art deco, and midcentury modern. Only a fraction of the store's antique fixtures are displayed, but the Crown City Collection features many convincing reproductions. *1047 N. Allen Ave., Pasadena, 626-794-1188 or www.crowncityhardware.com.*

DETAILS The emphasis in this sleek showroom is on contemporary hardware, the sort you might find in the innovative homes featured in glossy shelter publications. From anodized aluminum street numbers and voluptuously shaped mailboxes to radically minimalistic doorknobs, cabinet handles, and bathroom fixtures, this place is all about the latest designs imported from Italy, Japan, Germany, and England. *503 N. La Cienega Blvd., West Hollywood, 310-659-1550.*

LIZ'S ANTIQUE HARDWARE The mind boggles at the millions (billions?) of pieces of salvaged hardware that fill crates and baskets in the aisles and line the walls of this shop. Many of the stripped and oiled metal bits date from between the Civil War and 1970, but new and reproduction items, including the LAH Collection, are available, too. The fun is in hunting through it all. *453 S. La Brea Ave., L.A., 323-939-4403 or www.LAHardware.com.*

WINDOW TREATMENTS

AERO SHADE CO. Whether you're just moving in or finally sprucing up, this shop delivers custom shades—Roman and roller—in four weeks or less, depending on whose fabric you use, yours or theirs. It also offers pleated shades; vertical, mini, and old-fashioned Venetian blinds; and shutters. But before you decide, consider an increasingly popular option: fiberglass solar shades that block heat and glare while preserving the view. *8404 W. 3rd St., L.A., 323-655-2411.*

BAY SCREENS AND SHADES Say you don't want distracting window treatments to spoil your room with a view, but you still need to keep bugs out or children and pets in. Retractable screens are an almost invisible solution. Made of metal mesh or fiberglass cloth, the screens can be mounted to most window and door frames. At this 52-year-old shop, they'll even motorize them for touch-of-a-button operation. *2834 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, 310-828-7998.*

SILK TRADING CO. The sumptuous silk taffetas, velvets, and damasks displayed in the showroom are suitable for upholstery as well as curtains and shades, so take your pick and order custom. Or opt for instant gratification with the store's equally elegant Drapery out-of-a Box. Either way, your windows are sure to make the best-dressed list. *360 S. La Brea Ave., L.A., 323-954-9280; 3333 Bear St., Ste. 110, Costa Mesa, 714-689-3004; or www.silktrading.com.*


Russel Wright

LIGHTING





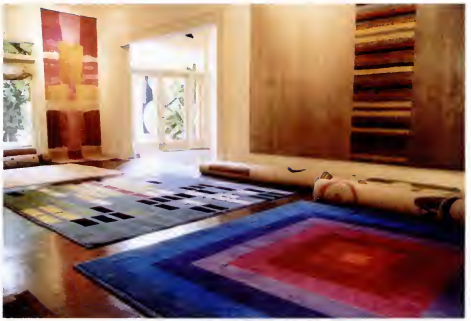
GALLERY OF FUNCTIONAL ART Working in a variety of media, the artists represented at Lois Lambert's shop at Bergamot Station put on a spectacular light show. Among the standouts are sculptural forms in flexible wood and translucent paper by William Leslie, pipe and guitar string by Steve Bewley, and thin maple veneer by Mark Chai. For lamps that are fanciful yet serious about conserving the world's natural resources, Kwytza Kraft recycles sanitized single-use chopsticks. *Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Bldg. E3, Santa Monica, 310-829-6990 or www.galleryoffunctionalart.com.*

JONATHAN ADLER A few years ago potter Jonathan Adler took his retro-inflected ceramics, electrified them, and faster than you can flip a switch, became a lamp designer, too. Fans have embraced his lighting line, which includes adaptations of Adler's fluted, gourdlike vessels, charming animals, and striped and platinum finishes. Shades are plain white paper, the better to flaunt those shapely bases. *8125 Melrose Ave., L.A., 323-658-8390 or www.jonathanadler.com.*

PAUL FERRANTE Over the past half century, home owners with deep pockets and impeccable taste have prized this shop's fine 18th- and 19th-century English and French sconces, lanterns, torchères, and chandeliers. But those on a tighter budget shouldn't despair. Owner Tom Raynor also customizes excellent reproductions displayed here and at his companion showroom across the street. Whether your style is Old World or New Millennium, count on something here lighting the way. *8464 Melrose Pl., L.A., 323-653-4142.*

PLUG It's rare to walk into a lighting store and discover lamps you haven't seen elsewhere, but the cutting-edge European designs sold here are more like dazzling artworks than mere illumination. Many, in fact, have been exhibited in museums, including L.A.-based Alison Berger's exquisite handblown crystal pendants, one etched with the words of Leonardo da Vinci. Among the other eye-catchers are chandeliers that resemble glowing jellyfish, twinkling branches, and gleaming artichokes. *8017 Melrose Ave., L.A., 323-653-5635 or www.pluglighting.com.*

BRIGHT IDEAS: Alison Berger and Jacopo Foggini lighting at Plug (above); contemporary rugs at Christopher Farr (below)



KATHLEEN CLARK

RUGS & CARPETING

CHRISTOPHER FARR This London-based rug company produces contemporary designs with centuries-old Turkish craftsmanship. Because each rug is handwoven using hand-spun, hand-dyed wool and mohair, delivery takes about six months. Select from an archive of 500 styles by noted artists and designers such as Farr, Gunta Stölzl, Andrée Putman, Allegra Hicks, and Romeo Gigli. Or come up with something completely original. In both cases, you can choose your own palette. *748 N. La Cienega Blvd., L.A., 310-967-0064 or www.cfarr.co.uk.*

LINOLEUM CITY Despite the name, roughly half of the sales at this family-owned institution—it opened in 1948—come from wall-to-wall carpeting and area rugs. You'll find a range of less-expensive synthetics and better-quality wools from major manufacturers, along with a friendly, patient staff to guide you through the sample room, carpet rolls, and remnants. Custom services include binding and serging. *5657 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A., 323-469-0063 or www.linoleumcity.com.*

LIVINGREEN So many Angelenos were making the trek to explore this Santa Barbara store's earth-friendly design options that proprietor Ellen Strickland launched a Culver City outpost in October. Both locations offer flooring of sustainable woods, bamboo, cork, and recycled rubber as well as attractive carpets and rugs of nontoxic, chemical-free wool, cotton, jute, sisal, coir, sea grass, and abaca. For maintenance without dangerous fumes or residues, Strickland also carries Safecoat sealers and cleansers. *8675 Washington Blvd., Culver City, 310-838-8442; 218 Helena Ave., Santa Barbara, 866-966-1319; or www.livingreen.com.* LA


LUDWIG



THE RECRUIT

HE IS AFFLUENT AND EDUCATED, A SUBURBAN KID WHO HAS GROWN UP WEIGHING OPTIONS, NOT CHASING LAST RESORTS. NOW HE WANTS TO FIGHT FOR US IN IRAQ. WHAT MADE HIM BECOME A SOLDIER? BY JESSE KATZ
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES FEE

I, MATT LUDWIG

HE IS A WHITE BOY, SLENDER AND PASTY, WITH WIDE BLUE eyes, dirty blond sideburns, a translucent mustache, and a tangled goatee. He wears a limp, day-old T-shirt and saggy, nylon cargo pants. For the occasion he has removed his knit Billabong beanie, which normally clings like a burglar's tuque to the top of his brow, and his twin cubic-zirconia earrings, which the girl he likes had goaded him into acquiring just a couple weeks before.

DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR...

His right arm is raised. His left is tucked behind the small of his back. He rocks, ever so slightly, on the balls of his feet, reciting his oath in suite 1039, the Ceremony Room, a red-carpeted, wood-paneled chamber within the Los Angeles station of the United States Military Entrance Processing Command. It is one of those monumental yet invisible rituals of the city—thousands of recruits, from every branch of the service, herded each year through a concrete bunker on the fringes of Crenshaw, pledging to fight and, if necessary, die to protect what the lieutenant on the dais calls "our way of life." On this October afternoon, the fifth session of the day, there are 15 young men and women taking that plunge, some already shorn and fit, others looking too squeamish or too thuggish to have even considered it. Matt stands near the front, itching for a cigarette. He is unassuming yet over-caffeinated, somewhere between geeky and cool, a mix of Tom Petty and David Spade, with a touch of Shaggy from *Scooby-Doo*.

TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND...

He is here from Simi Valley, the embodiment of neat suburbia, a community perpetually ranked among the safest in the nation. He is halfway through a bachelor's degree at California Lutheran University, a $29,000-a-year investment. His parents are affluent professionals, liberals turned evangelicals who have taken pains to shelter Matt from the excesses of their generation. He reacts to news with an "Oh, my goodness!" or a "How crazy is that?" He is 20 but has never voted.

THE CONSTITUTION...

Eleven days earlier, Matt was at work, ringing up a Grand Slam Slugger. He had just clocked in, another morning shift at Denny's, practicing the niceties of cashier and host. Handing him the check was a sergeant first class, tall and chiseled and stiff. He wore a creased olive uniform. There were stripes on his epaulets and medals on his chest. Matt was nearly a foot shorter, his emerald uniform billowing from a spidery waist. Pinned to his breast, there was a name tag: WE WILL PUT OUR CUSTOMERS FIRST. Matt asked the soldier how everything was. "You ever thought about the army?" the soldier asked Matt.

OF THE UNITED STATES...

America needs Matt Ludwig. Without him, without the quarter of a million other volunteers who join the armed forces every year, we face the specter of a draft, of anyone's son or daughter being shipped off to combat. Yet there is something awkward and cheerless about watching it happen, about witnessing a kid—caught between adolescence and adulthood, undaunted but inexperienced, whom we do not even trust with a beer—take such a giant leap. Matt is not driven by desperation. He is not fanatical or blustery or reckless. He does not have to do this, and if a few things about his life were different, he probably would not be swearing it away. But things are not different, which is why Matt finds himself here, seeking, asking—who he is, what he believes in, how he wants to be remembered. They are the epic questions of any life, questions that do not always come with satisfactory answers. If this freshly minted private wants to fight for us, if he is willing to die for us in Iraq, should we salute him as a hero? Or pray he comes to his senses? "Nothing's ever felt so right," Matt says.

SO HELP ME GOD...



PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE: MATT, IN THE CEREMONY ROOM, AFTER HIS OATH



The first oath of Matt's life was anything but voluntary. Standing before his first-grade class at the Capital Christian Center, he was instructed to accept Jesus as his savior.

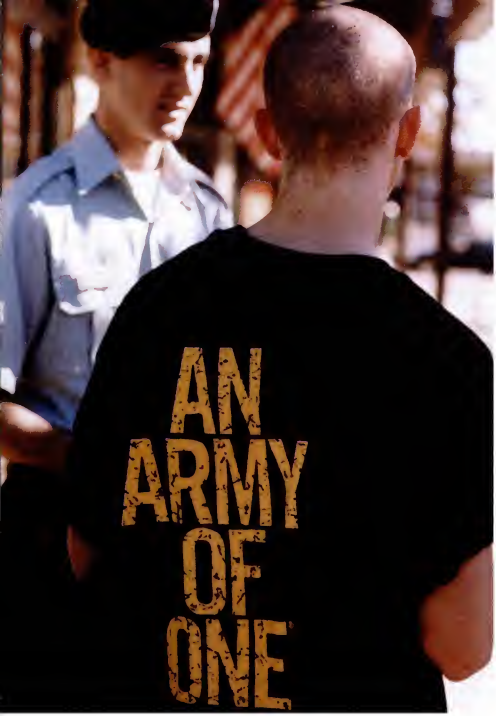
Capital Christian had been his parents' idea, a fundamentalist megachurch that towers over Highway 50 on the outskirts of Sacramento. Matt was raised in nearby Cameron Park, on the western slope of gold country. It is a landscape more rustic, less invented, than Southern California's, but after a childhood of religious study, of pursuing "excellence in Christ," Matt was choking on graces and airs. "Everything's basically forced down your throat," he says. "I saw so many people put up a front, like, 'Oh, I'm such a great Christian,' because that's what everybody wanted to hear." As a teenager he had to take a vow of sexual chastity until marriage. To guard against temptation, the school banned all dancing, hosting a banquet instead of a prom. In 2002, the year Matt graduated, Capital Christian made headlines for expelling a kindergartner—the child's mother had refused to give up her job as a stripper. "They always played it up like we needed to be protected against the evils of the world, but in order to defend against that you need to know what's going on in the world, and they don't teach that," Matt says. "There's no life preparation."

Without any faith to lose, Matt headed south, to Cal Lutheran, the secluded 3,000-student liberal arts university in Thousand Oaks that, by comparison, scarcely qualified as religious. In his first year he slew all the taboos of home: smoke, drink, sex. It was eye-opening, just not in the way he expected. No longer bound by a moralistic code, Matt found he was still in a place consumed by appearances, by rigid rules of status and class. He was surrounded, at last, by an abundance of female possibilities, but having never played the game—acquired the requisite brands, mastered the appropriate styles—he felt himself harshly judged. He came to a bitter and self-defeating conclusion. "There's a lot of cute girls," he says, "but they're all uptight bitches." Matt grew isolated, skipping classes and winging tests. He is possessed by a peculiar blend of intelligence and spaciness, the kind of student who can ace a final without cracking a book, then flub the one exam he tries to pass. He fixated on chess, waging fervid matches against his cell phone. His brain is wired that way, for games of logic and strategy, to the exclusion sometimes of a wider cultural awareness. One semester he signed up for modern dance; to his disappointment and embarrassment, it did not prove to be a course in hip-hop technique. He declared himself a criminal justice major, then lost interest in school altogether. Before classes resumed last September, he requested a leave of absence. There had to be something else. "I don't care what I have to do," Matt says, "I'm not going back home."

He started at Denny's for $7.50 an hour. It was enough to move out of the dorms and into a rooming house on the Mexican side of Simi, not far from the Metrolink tracks. He slept on the floor, next to a pile of *Maxim* magazines and Carl's Jr. wrappers, sharing a bathroom with half a dozen other renters. "I feel so different from the main people I am supposed to be with, like middle-class, upper-class white," he says. "It's like I just got sick of them. They treat you like shit. I like real people who don't put up a front."

Denny's is just a mile from the army's Simi Valley recruiting station, one of 55 in the Los Angeles Recruiting Battalion and more than 1,685 worldwide, which together are responsible for procuring nearly 100,000 new soldiers a year. That is not a target. It is an order. Every recruiter has a quota—usually two enlistees per month—which means endless days of trolling for prospects, suggesting, enticing, inspiring, cajoling, an army of salesmen unleashed on the civilian world. The recruiting doctrine, a 13-page primer known as Pamphlet 350-7, is straight out of the Zig Ziglar school: "The army is a product which can be sold.... We are salesmen in every sense of the word.... You are the best advertisement for the army.... Stand tall, look sharp, and assume an attitude that says to your community, 'Here I am, your army recruiter. Focus on me.' " On that October

CONSCIOUS OF BEING COURTED, MATT LOOKS BOTH ANXIOUS AND ALOOF, UNSURE IF HE SHOULD BE MAKING A GOOD IMPRESSION OR FEIGNING NONCHALANCE.



AN ARMY OF ONE

PRIVATE LUDWIG MATT HEAD SHORN, GOES RECRUITING WITH THOSE WHO RECRUITED HIM

morning at Denny's, Matt may have seen a soldier grabbing breakfast. But the soldier, Timothy J. Waud, was at work. "You've got to win their hearts and minds," says Waud, his shirttails pulled taut by stays running down to his socks. "You've got to act like you care about these kids—for real. Not just because you're paid to."

The army's Los Angeles battalion, which covers an immense swath of Southern California, from the Central Valley to the Orange County line, has struggled to accomplish its mission. It was called on to enlist 3,615 soldiers last year; it managed 1,968. A 16-year veteran, the last five as a recruiter, Waud approaches the job like a Green Beret, eating little, sleeping less, setting his clocks 15 minutes fast to keep ahead of the action. As chief of the Thousand Oaks station for most of 2004, he came closer than any other commander in the battalion to making his numbers—delivering 32 of the 37 enlistees he was supposed to drum up. That he succeeded in an upscale community, thought to be above the army's typical inducements, sent his stock even higher. A week before dropping in at Denny's, he was assigned to turn around the Simi Valley station, one of the region's worst performers last year. Matt suddenly had the king of L.A. recruiters in his backyard. "I'm not going from number one to the bottom," Waud had vowed. "Ain't gonna happen."

Like most young adults of the post-9/11 age, Matt had been subjected to the military's overtures, one more urgent than the last, ever since high school. The marines came calling first; he shrugged them off. Later it was the navy; not a second thought. He was neither a bleeding heart nor a flag-waving patriot. "I question everything," Matt says. "Politically, I'm kind of in between. I play devil's advocate on all sorts of stuff. I have no faith, but I'm not an atheist. I dunno, is there a term for that?" Now his suitor was the army, the largest and perhaps least glamorous of the services, a recruiter once again sizing him up—and at a time that could hardly have been less auspicious. The previous month, the U.S. death toll in Iraq had topped 1,000, an artificial milestone perhaps, but a test nonetheless of America's stomach for a war with no end in sight. The list so far had included 127 from California, more than any other state in the nation. Among the mourned, three from right here: in January, a Simi Valley High School graduate; in March, a Moorpark High graduate; in April, another Simi graduate. "Pretty much everything I've learned, I've learned from myself—trial and error," Matt says. "Fortunately there haven't been many errors. I wouldn't be this far. I just make good judgments, I guess."



When Matt's parents were his age, Vietnam was raging and the draft was in full swing, their own politics to the left. They would not be the only two '60s Democrats to reinvent themselves as '80s Republicans, but the arc of their pendulum was so dizzying, it continues to roil their lives. "They've just flip-flopped all over the place," Matt says. "After hearing their histories, it still makes no sense to me."

His mother, Michelle, shares a lineage and a maiden name with Beat icon Jack Kerouac. At Carondelet, a private all-girls school in San Francisco's East Bay, she was suspended for handing out pamphlets at the behest of the Weather Underground. "They had kind of come up to me: 'Will you distribute these flyers about our antiwar rally on campus?'" she says. "When you're that young, you're so idealistic and so vulnerable." Matt's dad, Mark, also grew up a peacenik. He walked precincts for McGovern in high school. Later he studied prelaw at UC Davis but dropped out to backpack across Europe. "In my family, we hated the military," he says. "I never would have thought about joining. It would have been the last thing, a disgusting thing, for me to do."

They met at a Sacramento life insurance company, two young executives-in-training seeking stability, a newlywed couple slowly waxing conservative. Michelle nudged Mark about church. "We weren't Christians when we got married," she says. Mark promised to give it a try, once they had kids. Matt, the eldest of their four, was born in '83, at the height of the Reagan revolution. "I still wanted to play racquetball on Sunday mornings with my buddies," Mark says. "Michelle kept saying, 'Remember what we said.' I started going, but I didn't want to be there. It took months to sink in." By the time Matt was ready for kindergarten, his father had given himself over to Capital Christian, a 6,000-member Assemblies of God congregation. The Ludwigs continued that way for much of the next two decades, classes, sermons, seminars, socials, everything for Cap Christian—"our church family," says Mark. Then one day Michelle stopped going. The church, she decided, had grown too impersonal, the doctrine too extreme. "It's a very narrow, ultraconservative viewpoint that's presented," she says, "and there wasn't much freedom of discussion to argue that viewpoint, either at church or in our home." Matt had just left for Cal Lutheran, a step his mother endorsed but that his father derided as an expensive lark. In rapid succession, Michelle moved out, met a man, filed for divorce, and got married—last September 11, at the Aladdin in Las Vegas. Nothing has been the same.

"I don't understand what's happened to her," Mark says. "Here we are, we believe the Bible is the word of God, and it's clear—*clear*—and we go along, raising our family, believing that, and all of a sudden you say, 'I don't believe that anymore, I'm going to divorce you.' I can't stress how astounding this behavior is in the context of the way our family has lived our lives."

★ ★ ★

Clutching his phone and cigarettes, Matt walks through the tinted-glass doors of the Simi Valley recruiting center, 48 hours after he first met Waud. The station is in a shopping plaza, off the Tapo Canyon exit of the 118 freeway, next to a Fatburger, a Dairy Queen, and a Curves for Women. Sometimes it seems as if Simi is all name-brand chains and fabricated environments—babbling fountains and piped-in music and private security. Matt calls it Pleasantville. "So perfect," he says. "So bland."

Conscious of being courted, Matt looks both anxious and aloof, unsure if he should be making a good impression or feigning nonchalance. His snowboarder's cap, the color of cream gravy, is pulled low, affording him a touch more swagger than he might have sported at the restaurant. His fingers are threaded around an I ♥ MEXICO key chain. "My girlfriend's Hispanic," Matt explains.

Before the pitch can begin, he will need to take a test, a short multiple-choice exam to gauge his eligibility. The popular conception of the military may be that it preys on the wayward and dim, but any number of shortcomings—including the failure to graduate high school—can disqualify an otherwise eager candidate. Matt parks him-

THE YOUNG INHABIT A NAIVE UNIVERSE, THEIR RESTLESS ENERGY AT LEAST PARTLY A FUNCTION OF THEIR INNOCENCE. BUT MATT'S BLIND SPOTS, FOR A KID SO BRIGHT, CAN BE MYSTIFYING.



STANDING TALL: SERGEANT WAUD IS THE ARMY'S TOP RECRUITER IN LOS ANGELES

self in front of a laptop computer. The questions on the screen range from the vexing (What is the solution for x, if 8x - 2 - 5x = 82) to the bellicose (What is the meaning of *maim*? Of *ravage*? Of *obliterate*?). Time runs out before he can finish. He still scores in the 80s. "Obviously," says Waud, welcoming Matt into his office, "you're not a dumb guy."

Matt's chair is set up to the side of Waud's desk, so that they face each other, elbow to elbow. On the wall is a framed *Sports Illustrated* cover devoted to Pat Tillman, the former NFL star who was killed last year, by friendly fire, in Afghanistan. A radio is tuned to classic rock, the volume a little too high. A member of Rotary, Waud has been trained to establish rapport, to ask open-ended questions, to zero in on his prospect's DBM, or dominant buying motive. He gets Matt talking about speed, about the thrill of hitching himself to a turbocharged machine. In high school Matt owned a Toyota Supra, voted the best car of his senior class. Until the engine gave out, he blazed through quarter-mile drags, regularly topping 120. In the process he got to know more than a few cops. "In a good way?" Waud asks. "Yeah, well, sometimes," Matt says. He has been looking into the California Highway Patrol, sort of an if-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em approach. But the CHP, pinched by the state's budget crisis, has been in no rush to hire.

"What got you interested in being a cop in the first place?" Waud asks.

"Kind of the war," Matt says. "I don't really know."

"What is it about the war that triggered something in you," Waud asks, "whereas it made other people go, '*Waa-baa*, I'm scared?"

"I'm sick of the status quo, like just doing the same thing day after day. It's nice to be part of history."

"You sound like a guy that wants to go out there and blow shit up."

"My purpose for going into the military is, like, I'd *want* to go fight," Matt says. "I hear other people: 'Oh, I don't want to go over.' I dunno, you're a soldier. Why not fight? That's your job."

"Right," Waud says.

They talk about the jobs the army offers, 212 in all, from cook to mechanic to pilot to sniper. With Matt's score, he could probably qualify for anything. None offers a guarantee of combat, just as none comes with an assurance of nondeployment. It would all depend on his specialty, his unit, world events, and luck. Waud pulls out a three-ring binder, each page held in a laminated sleeve. He shows Matt pictures of rifles. Of tanks. Of missiles. Of choppers. "I used to play war games, like Risk, Axis and Allies, Stratego," Matt says. "Does that lead into anything?" Waud tells him about military intelligence, » CONTINUED ON PAGE 212



FORGOTTEN HEROES: (left to right) "Human Torch" Jay Underwood, producer Roger Corman, director Oley Sassone, "Invisible Girl" Rebecca Staab, "The Thing" Michael Bailey Smith, "Mr. Fantastic" Alex Hyde-White

FANTASTIC

MARVEL STUDIOS DOESN'T WANT YOU TO SEE BY ROBERT ITO PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL KELLEY



FAUX!



IT'S

difficult to judge Stan Lee as a storyteller because so much of what he does is not, strictly speaking, literary. As cocreator of the Amazing Spider-Man and the Incredible Hulk and a host of other characters at Marvel Comics, Lee concocted plots and dialogue and masterful sound effects—*Thwipp! Btok!*—but it was artists like Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko who brought the heroes to life with a dramatic pose or a well-drawn grimace. Were the comics great, or were they just drawn great? Lee certainly advanced the language of the medium, expanding young readers' vocabularies with words like *sepulchral* and *fortuitous* and *inexplicable*—but where he excelled was in the imagination and audacity of his stories. A private high school for teenage mutants? A silvery alien who surfs the cosmos seeking planets for his gigantic master to devour, then falls in love with a verdant world, Earth, that his lord wants to eat? Genius.

The tale that Lee is telling this morning, however, has neither silvery aliens nor world-eating villains. It is a Hollywood story. Sitting in his Beverly Hills office surrounded by comics and Spider-Man memorabilia, Lee has the deep tan and large tinted glasses of a Palm Springs retiree. At 82, after a lifetime spent building a pop culture empire, Lee is describing the bizarre saga of a movie based on *The Fantastic Four*, his groundbreaking comic about a bickering, dysfunctional team of superheroes. Lee created the series with Jack Kirby in 1961, the inaugural book in what would come to be known as the Marvel Universe. This summer, on Hollywood's all-important July 4 weekend, Fox will release a big-budget movie based on the series. Today, though, Lee is talking about a far different movie, one made more than a decade ago.

"That movie," says Lee, "was never supposed to be shown to anybody." He peers out from behind his sunglasses, his voice a mix of laughter and gravel. "This fellow had the rights to do the Fantastic Four movie for, like, 15 years, and finally the option was due to lapse. If he hadn't begun principal photography by December, he would lose that option. And he still wanted to make that movie! So he figured he would bat out a fast movie for a dollar-ninety-eight budget just so he could keep that option." Lee's smile drops. "The tragic thing," he says, drawing out his words, "is that the people involved with the film were *not aware* that that movie was never supposed to be shown to anybody." He pauses. "Do you see? It was never supposed to be seen by any living human beings."

Hollywood has created thousands of movies that never made it into theaters. Many go straight to video; others are so bad they can't find a buyer. *The Fantastic Four* is a far rarer case because it was a ploy, not really a film at all, a backroom deal masquerading as a movie. While other films have earned "lost classic" status because their subject matter was controversial (Jerry Lewis's 1972 Nazi death camp drama *The Day the Clown Cried*) or because the film itself has dissolved (most of 1924's *Greed* and countless other silents), *The Fantastic Four*—one of Hollywood's strangest lost classics—was neither controversial nor truly lost. It was buried.

Lee's account is pretty much the accepted one, the one told in Hollywood circles and repeated over the years in books and magazines and on Internet fan sites. "This fellow," the man with the option, was German producer Bernd Eichinger, the filmmaker enlisted to churn out the fast, cheap version in 1992 was Roger Corman, Hollywood's celebrated "King of the Bs," the pioneer famed for popularizing several film genres (gangs on bikes, women in prison) and an inspiration for the independent film movement. The tragedy, according to Lee, was that nobody bothered to tell Corman or the cast and crew—who struggled mightily to bring the film in on time and on budget—that the entire production was a sham.

Like many other Hollywood tales, finding out what really hap-

1993 CAST: LONA LIEBERMAN, 2005 CAST: NELS ISRAELSON/TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX



pened depends on who's telling the story. Ask ten different players—from Eichinger and Corman and Marvel Studios to the director and the cast and crew—and you'll get ten different versions. Many remain mystified about what took place and are anxious to know why the powers that be couldn't have just told them from the start that Eichinger's option would be lost if a film wasn't made. In the meantime, the "original" *Fantastic Four*—the film that was never supposed to be shown to anybody—has become a legend among Marvel fans and cult film aficionados, a fable fueled by the countless illegal copies that sprout up on eBay and at comic book conventions. Online fans and critics dissect every detail of the movie, with reviews ranging from "charming" to "one of the worst films ever made." Marvel is doing its best to make sure that the film stays little more than a rumor, at least until after its big summer release, the "real" *Fantastic Four*, hits theaters.

TWO BY FOUR: Scenes from the 1993 movie (above) and its cast (below); a promotional photo for the 2005 film (bottom)

As dirty tricks go, the fate of the first *Fantastic Four* is top-drawer stuff. Corman has made more than 450 movies, with credits including *Night of the Blood Beast* and *Death Race 2000*. But it's *The Fantastic Four* that he calls "the strangest film production I've ever been involved with in my life."

WHEN LEE AND KIRBY

dreamed up *The Fantastic Four*, Marvel was an upstart in the superhero genre. DC Comics had made a fortune with characters like Superman, Batman, and the Flash, good-looking, square-jawed men without discernible problems or personality flaws; the Fantastic Four, by contrast, had quirks and neuroses galore. Mr. Fantastic, the limb-stretching leader, was an unlikable stiff. His then girlfriend (and future wife), the Invisible Girl, had a really visually unappealing superpower. The Human Torch was cool—what kid wouldn't want to be able to burst into flame and hurl blazing fireballs?—but the Thing was a misshapen, grumpy orange golem who, as it happened, hated Mr. Fantastic. While other heroes inhabited fictional cities, the Four lived and worked and bickered in Manhattan, on the corner of 42nd Street and Madison Avenue. The superheroes didn't even have costumes until the third issue, when identical blue bodysuits were fashioned for everyone but the Thing, who sported large, skintight shorts.

The series was an instant hit. Unlike the well-adjusted, glamorous superheroes over at DC, these guys were weird. The Thing's battle cry was "It's clobberin' time!" and what kind of superhero said anything like that? Readers wondered if he might just go nuts one day and start ripping off people's arms and legs. The book sparked a revolution at Marvel and in the comics world, leading to the creation of equally angsty, tormented heroes, from the Hulk (no love) to Spider-Man (no parents) to Daredevil (no eyes). Even DC followed suit, releasing comics that dealt with drug addiction and race relations. On the cover of the fourth issue, Lee jokingly declared *The Fantastic Four* THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE! and the honorific stuck.





Before long the Fantastic Four began popping up on TV, at a time when Saturday-morning cartoons were about as good as it got for a comic book franchise. In 1967, Hanna-Barbera, creators of *Yogi Bear* and *The Jetsons*, produced the first series. The animation looked cheap. Eleven years later NBC released *The New Fantastic Four*, replacing the popular Human Torch with an R2-D2 rip-off named H.E.R.B.I.E. the Robot. Viewers were confused by the change, and rumors spread that network executives axed the Torch because they were worried that impressionable kids might set themselves ablaze imitating their hero. The real explanation was, in some ways, even stranger. The Torch was unavailable for the series because Marvel had already broken up the team, selling the character's option to Universal executive Frank Price in 1977.

Universal still had the rights to the Torch in 1983, when producer Eichinger visited Lee in his Los Angeles home and inquired about purchasing the option to the Fantastic Four. A tall, dapper man of 55 who could pass for a royal or an Everest climber and who punctuates his German-inflected English with frequent "do you see"s and "do you



understand"s, Eichinger had made his fortune as CEO of Neue Constantin, Germany's most successful film production company. He loved big international deals and larger-than-life movies—his company produced everything from *The NeverEnding Story* to *Resident Evil* to a sympathetic biopic about Adolf Hitler—and had been a fan of the series, and of Marvel Comics, for years. "When I shook [Lee's] hand I was kind of wobbling," he says. "It was like meeting God." Because of the option problems, however, Eichinger left empty-handed.

Three years later he returned to Marvel, which had since regained the rights to the Human Torch. At that time Marvel was practically giving away its most lucrative characters, hoping that TV and film appearances would improve the company's portfolio. In a fire sale unfathomable in today's era of multimillion-dollar Spider-Man and X-Men franchises, Eichinger obtained the rights to the Fantastic Four, the evil Mole Man, the Silver Surfer—herald to the world-eating Galactus and one of Marvel's most beloved characters—and several other villains and ancillary characters. In 1985, the company sold *Spider-Man*, its most popular franchise, to Cannon Films for a paltry $225,000, probably less than the craft services budget on either Tobey Maguire blockbuster. According to one insider, the rights for the Fantastic Four went for $250,000. Eichinger won't confirm figures but admits that the price was "not enormous."



LOW PRICE LEADER: Roger Corman, legendary producer and master of the shoestring budget

For the next decade Eichinger tried to find backing for a Fantastic Four movie. Warner Bros. and Columbia expressed interest, but Marvel superheroes were still an untested property in the '80s; *Spider-Man*, in development limbo for years, wouldn't be released until 2002. The price tag to make the movie, of course, was another concern, with estimates ranging from $50 to $150 million. Putting a single superhero on film, with all the required stunt work and special effects, was one thing—but four?

With his option set to run out on December 31, 1992, and few backers in sight, Eichinger approached Marvel about extending his contract. "They didn't want to prolong it," he says, "because they hated the deal, you know? They had realized by then that they could sell Marvel property for much more." DC's successes with the *Superman* and *Batman* franchises had proved the enormous earning potential of superhero films. To retain his option Eichinger needed to get production rolling on a Fantastic Four movie—*any* Fantastic Four movie. An idea came to him, one clever and simple and slightly devious. He wouldn't create the epic he had envisioned for the past nine years—how could he?—but a stopgap. "They didn't say I had to make a big movie," he says.

The producer immediately thought of Roger Corman, whose speed and thriftiness have become Hollywood lore. "Bernd came to me in September with a very strange story," Corman says. Eichinger explained his quandary to Corman and asked for his help. Corman crunched the numbers over the weekend and came up with a million-dollar budget for the entire production. With the end-of-year deadline only three months away, Corman wanted to start filming as late as possible so that he could have every possible day to prepare. He suggested December 31, the very day the option was due to lapse. "[Eichinger] said, 'No, that would be too obvious what I'm doing—why don't we start shooting on December 26?'" Corman says. "I told him, 'It's gonna be pretty obvious whether it's December 26 or December 31.'" Principal photography began on December 28.

Now came the task of assembling a cast and crew to populate this Potemkin village. The job of director went to Oley Sassone, son of hair product mogul Vidal Sassoon and actress Beverly Adams. Sassone had directed dozens of music videos through the '80s and '90s, fine ones, too, as well as a Don "the Dragon" Wilson vehicle for Corman called *Bloodfist 3: Forced to Fight*. But this was something different, something big. Imagine: One moment you're in the studio directing the "Broken Wings" video for Mr. Mister; the next you're getting the call to make a full-length action movie based on a huge comics franchise, one that you've loved since you were a kid growing up in New Orleans. "I didn't even need to think about it," says Sassone.

Auditions were quick. Corman wasn't looking for A-listers, not for the $3,500-a-week he was offering. Alex Hyde-White, a British-

CORBAN; MICHAEL KELLEY





born actor who had had small roles in a couple of prominent films—he was the polo-playing son of Ralph Bellamy in *Pretty Woman*—got picked to be Mr. Fantastic. The part of the Invisible Girl went to Rebecca Staab, a model and former Miss Nebraska. Jay Underwood, who played the titular character in the 1986 film *The Boy Who Could Fly*, was selected to play the Human Torch. The baby on the set—albeit a huge, brawny baby—was Michael Bailey Smith, a former offensive tackle for the Dallas Cowboys. He was cast as Ben Grimm, who became the Thing. This would be his second movie.

Much of the shooting took place in Venice, on the Concorde Studios soundstages that Corman had converted from a rotting lumberyard in 1980. Rats and bugs shared the hallowed halls with the specters of actors and directors past. James Cameron had been here that inaugural year, creating the walls of a spaceship out of McDonald's hamburger containers; Angie Dickinson took bubble baths and raised her gun-toting kinfolk here in *Big Bad Mama II*. The others who had learned their craft under Corman through the years—Jack Nicholson, Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Ron Howard, Peter Fonda—were here in spirit, laughing about Corman's legendary cheapness and awestruck at how far they had come.

All of which made the leaky roofs, closet-size dressing rooms, and craft services bologna sandwiches that much easier to overlook. Sure, the sets had been recycled from past movies, and the costumes were crude, the stitching visible, the fit saggy in spots. But Hyde-White and the others were leads in this Marvel movie, and how many Hollywood greats had gotten their start in Corman productions just like this? Even the budget, by Corman standards, was not that bad; *Carnosaur*, an ambitious *Jurassic Park* rip-off starring Diane Ladd, would be made at Concorde months later for a lot less. "We knew what the history was to this piece," says Underwood, "and we knew that if we did our best here, that this could be good for all of our careers."

The crew shot for 21 days, crash-landing a spaceship in Agoura, blowing up a lab on the Loyola Marymount campus, and holding meetings at the team headquarters in the old Pacific Stock Exchange downtown. Lee visited the set on several occasions, chatting with Sassone and pumping up the cast. "Lee walked up to me and he goes, 'When I created this character, you are that person I envisioned,'" says Smith. "I thought that was really cool." The mood—despite 12-hour days—was exuberant. "We had Neue Constantin and [Eichinger] and Concorde Studios and Roger all there," says Hyde-White. "We felt we were making a real movie."

Postproduction lasted for several months. Composers David and Eric Wurst pitched in $6,000 of their own money to record the soundtrack with a 48-piece orchestra at Capitol Records. Sassone cut the film at night, borrowing equipment while working on other jobs. "Guys were loaning us cameras...just so we could get it finished," says Sassone.

THE

film lives on through DVDs passed around by curious fans. *The Fantastic Four* is faithful to the comic, and anyone who has read the Lee-Kirby comic or seen the cartoons will recognize their heroes. College student Reed Richards is working with pal Victor Von Doom on a machine that will harness the power of Colossus, an enormous energy field from outer space. The attempt fails, and Von Doom's face is horribly scarred when the machine explodes in a fury of sparks and smoke. Ten years later Richards convinces three others to travel with him into space: Ben Grimm, the excitable Johnny Storm, and Johnny's sister, Susan, who had a crush on Richards when she was around 13 and is now, much to Richards's surprise, all grown up and really hot. Von Doom, who has since become the evil Dr. Doom, plots to sabotage their spacecraft. Cosmic rays flood the ship, giving the astronauts different superpowers. The Fantastic Four battle Doom, who is planning to—what else?—rule the world.

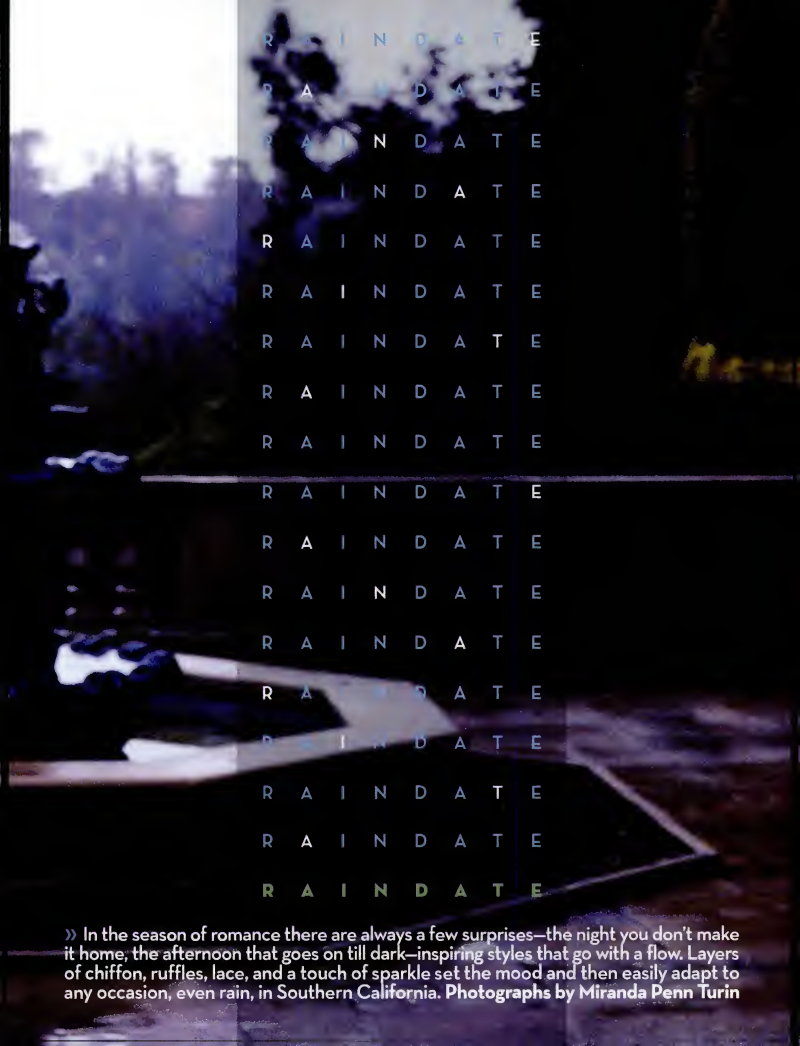
Fun and earnest and sometimes campy, the film is better than other Marvel movies that actually did get released in the '80s and '90s, cinematic crimes like the Dolph Lundgren feature *The Punisher* or 1991's *Captain America*, considered by many to be the worst Marvel movie of all time. There is the occasional cornball dialogue, but comic books are often full of lines that are perfect for the printed page but tough to sell on film. The pace is fast, so the story never drags.

Many of the effects, however, are laughably cheap. When Mr. Fantastic extends his leg to trip some bad guys, you almost expect to hear the *sproing* rubber-band sound effect from the Road Runner cartoons. In other scenes, his stretching » CONTINUED ON PAGE 218



SOFT TOUCH

ON HER: Dior by John Galliano silk "Elle" dress, $6,390, and cotton belted jacket, $3,865; **Adelson** pearl and emerald necklace, $2,125. **ON HIM: Salvatore Ferragamo** suede blazer, $2,005, and cotton pants, $280; **Marc Jacobs** cotton shirt, $355.



» In the season of romance there are always a few surprises—the night you don't make it home, the afternoon that goes on till dark—inspiring styles that go with a flow. Layers of chiffon, ruffles, lace, and a touch of sparkle set the mood and then easily adapt to any occasion, even rain, in Southern California. **Photographs by Miranda Penn Turin**



SHOWERED WITH LOVE

» **Dolce & Gabbana** wool and silk jacket, $1,425, and pants, $325; cotton shirt, $155; **Giorgio Armani** leather shoes, $278. OPPOSITE: **Ralph Lauren** beaded silk gown, $6,800; **H. Stern** diamond, gemstone, and platinum "Cobblestones" bracelet, $18,000; **Rosalina** diamond and sapphire "Vine" ring, $9,500.

STYLIST: BRIAN ROMERA/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS. HAIR: JOHN BLANKENSHIP/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS. MAKEUP: BETHANY KARLSON/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS. MODELS: KRISTINA ROSTAD/FORD MODELS; ERIC/FELLOWS/BIED







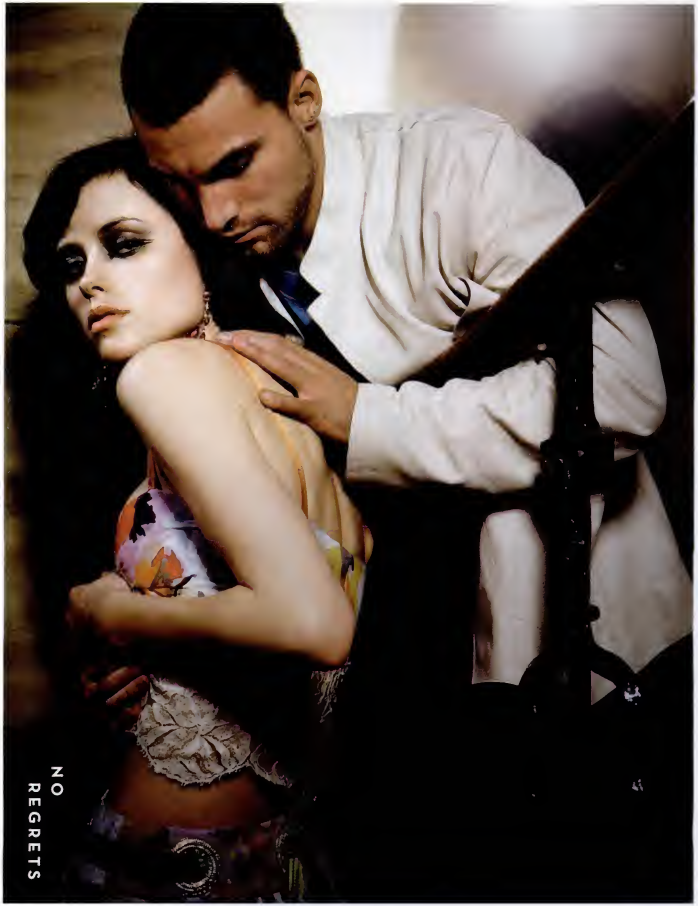




PLAYING AROUND



» ON HER: **Burberry** cotton trench coat, $940, and silk dress with ribbon belt, $585. ON HIM: **Michael Kors** cotton jacket, $1,295, and pants, $495; **John Varvatos** cotton shirt, $155; **DKNY** leather and canvas "Victor-Lace Up" sneakers, $168. OPPOSITE: **Sass & Bide** cotton dress with sequins, $530; **Erica Courtney** citrine and pearl rosary with platinum cross, $4,320, and gold necklace with Tahitian pearls, $6,000; **Rosalina** white and yellow gold bead necklace, $600.



» ON HER: **Valentino** silk and lace top, $2,190, and belted silk skirt, $4,880; **H. Stern** pink tourmaline, diamond, and platinum "Nature" earrings, $14,500. ON HIM: **Giorgio Armani** suede jacket, $1,198; **John Varvatos** cotton pants (part of suit, not shown), $1,495. OPPOSITE: **Chanel** chiffon dress, $5,820; **Ralph Lauren** satin and lizard sandals, $995; **Erica Courtney** short morganite beaded necklace with diamond, platinum, and morganite charm, $7,440, and long morganite beaded necklace, $1,200. **For stores, see Shopping Directory on page 217.**




COLORFORMS



Charles Chang Lima linen and velvet jacket, $840; **Roland Mouret** silk crepe tank, $285; **Milly** cotton skirt, $270; **Stronesse** suede shoes, $405; **Alan Friedman** white gold, tsavorite, and prehnite ring, $6,750. BEAUTY NOTE: On eyes: **Christian Dior** Mono Eye Shadow in Tropic, $22.

» Spring is all about color on the face—and on the body. Shades may vary in saturation and styles in silhouette, but the effect is undeniably pretty. **Photographs by Sheryl Nields**



Jennifer Nicholson cotton blouse, $450, and shoes, $400; **Rebecca Taylor** silk vest, $205; **Nicole Miller** satin skirt, $200; **David Webb** yellow gold, platinum, diamond, and turquoise ring, $7,200. OPPOSITE: **Roberto Cavalli** leather vest, $1,795. BEAUTY NOTE: On eyes: Nars Eye Shadow in Grand Bleu, $20, and MAC Eye Shadow in Electric Eel, $13.

STYLIST: TRISH SUMMERVILLE/INCLOVER. HAIR: COLLEEN CONWAY/MAGNET. MAKEUP: DIRELENE JACOBS/PALETO AGENCY. MODEL: CATRINA STELLA/L.A. MODELS





Stuart silk dress, Stephen Webster garnet and diamond earrings, $6,400; David Yurman cable collection 18mm 4.5-carat ruby ring, available; Sonya Ooten gold and ruby earrings (worn as hair accessory), stylist. OPPOSITE: Diane Von Furstenberg cotton dress, $345, and silk bangles, $20 each; Celine "Spectator" sandals, $510; Lauren Schaefer ruby and bead earrings, $85; Alan Friedman yellow gold and tourmaline ring, $3,750. BEAUTY NOTE: On lips: L'Oréal Sheer Juicy Lip Gloss in Candy Apple, $7.50.


FUCHSIA
5215 c



» **Luella** silk chiffon dress, $1,585; **Moschino** faille trench coat, $1,145; **Vicini** leather and enamel belt, $370; **Cesare Paciotti** leather slingbacks, $445; **Tom Binns** rose gold earrings, $285, and rose gold bracelets, $325 each. OPPOSITE: **Mille K.** cashmere and sequin cardigan, $265; **Rachel Pally** jersey scarf, $46. BEAUTY NOTE: On cheeks: **Laura Mercier** Apricot Face Tint, $20.

For stores, see Shopping Directory on page 217.


APRICOT
0071 c

Tofu Test

Umenohana hopes that L.A. is ready to take bean curd seriously

by Patric Kuh









FOR SOME, THE HISTORY of tofu may lead back into the mists of East Asian history, but for most of us it leads to the *Whole Earth Catalog*. Close your eyes and conjure your first college-dorm fridge. There it is, the block of tofu submerged in water that you bought at the co-op with the lentils on the floor and the sagging community board. In the rare instances that you attempted to cook it, you tried to be creative. Whatever concoction resulted left you secure in the knowledge—and perhaps smug in the satisfaction—that you were getting your protein but not hogging it from the top of the food chain.

Oh, how times have changed. You now talk about the marbling of beef. You know the difference in consistency between a porterhouse and a New York strip. Your favorite college authors—Marcuse, Illich, Fromm, Freire—still serve their purpose, but now, so do a three-peppercorn sauce with a dry-aged steak and a bottle of Clos du Val.

Well, tofu wants you back. In fact, there's a Japanese company that's put down a $3.5 million wager that the new you, comfortable with tasting menus and adept at swirling a deep red wine in a tulip-shaped glass, will consider a tofu restaurant a tempting destination. Umenohana in Beverly Hills swats away that business about saving the world through soy products and positions tofu firmly in the domain of modern gastronomy. Who will buy that premise? Despite growing popularity, tofu has not lost its virtuous connotations. The challenge for the restaurant is convincing L.A. to embrace the sandal-footed vegan's favorite curd as a serious gourmet ingredient—and pay for it.

UMENOHANA
443 Canon Drive
Beverly Hills
310-860-9236

Caviar, lobster, even Kobe beef, are offered, but they may not be enough to coax us through the door. One wonders if, in its eagerness to establish tofu as a fine-dining centerpiece, Umenohana isn't laying it on too thick. After all, we don't look to tofu for its ability to bring off breathtaking pairings—we've got wine for that. Tofu does, however, give a meal a pristine aura, one that Angelenos in their never-ending search for greater states of purity might warm to. If tofu is indeed to make a comeback, it won't be because when marinated and griddled it can pass as a steak but because when unadorned it represents a trembling link between the best sushi, oysters, and vodka.

THERE ARE 80 Umenohana restaurants in Japan. The outpost in Beverly Hills—the first in the United States—opened in October. It is in a new retail development that runs from Canon to Beverly. Other tenants include a massive Crate & Barrel and a branch of

BOX SET: The fare at Umenohana includes (clockwise from top left) Kobe beef and sashimi, grilled gluten skewers, *yodofu*, and *mineoka* tofu

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EDMUND BARR

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Dutton's bookstore. Despite a marble finish, Umenohana's exterior has a slightly alienating quality, thanks in part to the nearby yawning entrance of an underground public parking structure. But push open the heavy glass door and all is calm. Reeds stand amid banks of sand raked into elaborate patterns. Gilded ginkgo leaves are embedded in thick glass partitions that enclose a long, comfortable bar. Windows are hung with rice paper screens. Approaching a table in any of the three dining rooms, walking past blond wood walls, you come upon vases of serene design, potted orchids, recently picked blooms, and framed ceremonial kimonos that have the singular effect of making you feel that you are, step by step, disengaging from the world outside.

Would that reading the bill of fare had the same result. The wine list is a compendium of typos, clichés, and mistakes—apparently the legendary after-dinner wine Chateau d'Yquem has a "dry flavor." The food menu has deeper problems. Umenohana is a restaurant that highlights the traditions of tofu and the art of *kaiseki* dining, in which every aspect of a meal—not only the flavors but the rituals of service—is presented as part of a unified aesthetic experience. This menu tries to cram it all in. A full-page spiel about the meaning of Zen serves as a preamble to six pages that list three lunchtime menus, a slew of à la carte items, and four differently priced set dinner menus. I'm not hearing one hand clapping. Even Japanese customers look confused.

A large window looks onto a white tile–and–stainless steel area that resembles a dairy operation secured by a Hazmat team. It is here that cooks in white prepare the tofu, made from soybeans grown in Ohio for the restaurant's exclusive use. The kitchen delivers the pivotal ingredient in every possible form: as quivering blocks with spicy pork sauce, as binding for *siumai* dumplings filled with chicken and shrimp, as a thickening agent in a delectable chicken soup, and as a caramelized slab drizzled in Grand Marnier sauce for a magnificent variation of crème brûlée.



PILLOW TALK: Japanese art dresses up the walls

Those are the successes. But something is missing at Umenohana's center, an absence hinted at in the salad of tofu, pine nuts, lotus root chips, Parma ham, and sometimes Parmesan, that comes by rote as the first course of each menu. It is even more evident in a dish as basic as "braised vegetables," which ends up being a stir-fry with the one downer of the vegetable kingdom: miniature corn. Apparently, the Umenohana brass have perfected a menu in Japan and brought it here. While they may believe that promoting their native aesthetic is enough, to succeed in Los Angeles they must show some curiosity about ours. In L.A. a good salad—the Bibb at A.O.C., for example—sets the tone for a meal, encapsulating a complete sensibility. For us, the notion of braised vegetables creates the expectation of something lyrical and fine, reminiscent of a time when our relationship to the land was more intimate.

Angelenos might enjoy the stately reserve of *kaiseki*, but if Umenohana wants to bring diners back, it must show a little heart.

Umenohana's $45 eight-course set menu, the least expensive, gets bogged down by its own authenticity. Skewers of deep-fried wheat gluten are a tad *too* authentic. The $78 menu, however, with courses of lobster and Kobe beef sandwiched between rounds of sashimi and sushi, seems to bear the weight of proving the restaurant's bona fides. Surely there is something simpler and more resonant behind a tradition that takes soybeans and, turning them into curd, produces what many countries rely on as a dietary staple. Ideally, Umenohana would take us past its business plan and show us what tofu means culturally. We are not entering the elegance of Umenohana because we're desperate for affordable protein. Angelenos might enjoy the stately reserve of kaiseki, but if Umenohana wants to bring diners back, it must show a little heart. What was the imperative to sell tofu on Canon Drive? If we could sense the emotion behind this ingredient, and behind this restaurant, we'd be more apt to embrace both.

Yuba, the thin skin that forms on the surface of simmering soy milk, reveals the modest rustic nuances of Japanese culture, which passes down family-owned yuba houses for generations. Each establishment has its own recipe for preparing the delicacy, which is served fresh or dry. At Umenohana, crab and asparagus are wrapped in yuba for a cold appetizer, and diners can even make it themselves in a pot placed on a heating element at the center of the table. The most evocative version, however, is a hot appetizer of house-made yuba served in a *teoke*, or wooden crock, whose staves are held together by twin copper bands. If you saw a character in a Kurosawa film using it, you wouldn't be surprised. Inside is warm soy milk in which fresh sheets of yuba float. Diners lift them out with chopsticks or a slotted spoon, place them in a small bowl, and garnish them with sesame seeds, grated ginger, and a bonito-infused soy. Each ingredient is essential—the sesame seeds for an earthy nuttiness, the ginger for sharpening and amplification, the soy, with its maritime note, to send the dish into the realm of the elemental. Its lingering, clean taste is haunting.

Such an offering shows what Umenohana is capable of. Tofu is a single ingredient that can shine a light on an entire culture. But the restaurant must simplify. At the moment, the ceremonial blandishments of the servers and the endlessly complicated menus are unnecessary—we don't want to feel like we're in the emperor's antechamber. For now, instead of being a restaurant that invites us to return time and again, Umenohana provides an experience that need be tried only once. LA



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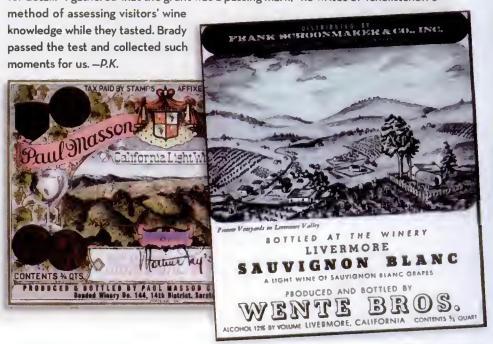
Fountain of Couth

ROY BRADY WAS a born collector. He started with stamps. By the end of junior high he had moved on to chemical elements, where the challenge lay in trapping, never mind displaying, the gases. While studying mathematics at the University of Chicago in the 1940s, he bought a bottle of Wente sauvignon blanc from the Livermore Valley and understood that fine wines offer not only a panoply of sensations but a theme around which his collecting could revolve. By the time he died in 1998, the longtime Northridge resident had split his library of 35,000 wine books and a catalogued collection of 55,000 wine labels between two universities. His celebrated cellar he disposed of himself.



Though employed by Northrop, Lockheed, and Rand as a researcher, Brady found time to write about wine. He was published in *Los Angeles* in the 1970s as well as in several now-defunct publications, such as *New West* and *Coast*. His unpublished writings have now been collected in *The Brady Book* (Nomis Press, 199 pages, $100). With an excellent introduction by Thomas Pinney, professor emeritus of English at Pomona College, this elegant volume, illustrated with many beautiful labels from Brady's collection, captures the voice of a man who could not abide vinous cant; he was an informed amateur whose style was at once accessible and punctilious, passionate and clear.

Among the many strengths of *The Brady Book* is a series of profiles that range from Major Ben C. Truman, the author of Southern California's first wine book, *See How It Sparkles*, published in 1896, to historically vital firsthand renderings of some of the men who created California's post-prohibition wine industry. These include Andre Tchelistcheff, Louis M. Martini, and Martin Ray. Brady displays a diarist's eye for detail. "I gathered that the grunt was a passing mark," he writes of Tchelistcheff's method of assessing visitors' wine knowledge while they tasted. Brady passed the test and collected such moments for us. —*P.K.*



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HomeGoods PRESENTS

HOME PERFECT

written by **Nash Lauriston**
photography by **Pete Bleyer**

IF YOUR HOME IS YOUR LITTLE HAVEN FROM THE WORLD, THEN YOUR MASTER SUITE IS YOUR REFUGE FROM THE REST OF THE HOUSE. "We're really coming together in the main rooms," designer Joe Ruggiero says of today's open floor plans, with party guests wandering from the kitchen to the living room for cocktail refills. "So we retreat to the bedroom," he says, evoking long, lazy Sunday mornings spent eating and reading. "It's a revitalizing center."


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HOME PERFECT



We retreat to the bedroo

Does your revitalizing center need revitalizing? You're not alone. Keeping the public spaces of one's home chic and inviting often means letting the private areas get a little faded and threadbare. But now that the holidays have passed and spring is approaching, you can stop worrying about the veranda heaters and start nourishing your inner sanctum. Could your bed use a pile of luxe accent pillows or a beautiful quilted comforter with matching shams? How about a dramatic new mirror over the vanity? It might be time for a trip to **HomeGoods**, where the ever-changing selection of unique treasures and brand-name items can be found at prices that are always 20 to 60 percent less than regular retail prices – enough to turn casual browsers into frequent buyers. The store has everything under one roof for every room under yours.

Not that you have to rip out and redo a whole space to set a new mood. Having all the pieces is necessary for jigsaw puzzles and car repairs, but not interior design, so don't be a completist unless you really feel like it. "A few key items can make a big difference in updating the look of a room," says HomeGoods spokesperson Robyn Arvedon. In the bedroom, you might only need a new bedside pattemed area rug, a colorful Italian wool throw, or a cushy leather reading chair. Perhaps the bathroom could use some new plush Turkish towels and coordinating countertop accessories. And a makeover of the closet is likely a simple matter of getting organized with color coordinated storage boxes and closet organizers that match the paint scheme of the room. "You don't have to do everything at once – a few key items can make all the difference. However, with HomeGoods' exceptional prices, you are able to purchase more new than you came for," says Arvedon.

Picturesque décor seems only fitting at **Water Terrace**, Southern California's seaside high-rise community nonpareil. The 450-unit complex, with apartments ranging from 800 to 3,500

Haven On Earth

Using clean lines and an urbane palette, designer Joe Ruggiero made this master suite a place for reading, writing, eating, and sleeping. We spend more than a third of our lives in the bedroom, so shouldn't it be the most beautiful space in the house?

n. It's a revitalizing center.

square feet, offers built-in style as peerless as the view. All units, from studios to four-bedroom penthouses, sport touches like granite countertops, stainless steel kitchen appliances, and private washers and dryers. Most have floor-to-ceiling windows; some have 10-foot ceilings.

Certain hassles are conveniently absent. There are no condo fees or homeowner's insurance. No property tax. No lawn to mow. The only time residents lift a finger is when they dial the concierge to arrange theater tickets or reserve the 16-seat, THX-equipped screening room. As director of leasing Tom Brown tells visitors, "At Water Terrace it's not just an apartment – it's a lifestyle." No wonder the complex is already 80% occupied. Terms range from three months to two years, and rent starts at $2,295.

In the showcase space – a two-bedroom, 1,495-square foot unit with a sweeping view of the central courtyard, Ruggiera worked with a color palette of hues ranging from sublime to saturated using all accents from HomeGoods. Whimsical purple sueded ottomans. Oversized apple green magazine bins. Lavender, dawn-filled, silk throw pillows. "People are welcoming color now more than ever," he says.

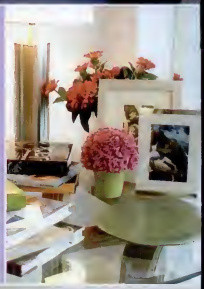
On the walls, he had **Cox Paint** apply shades from the Donald Kaufman Color Collection (for which Cox Paint is the exclusive West Coast distributor), selecting a feathery blue in the bedroom, a creamy beige in the powder room, and a dark sage in the bathroom and closet.

Faster than the paint could dry, Ruggiero found everything he needed for the space in a single visit to HomeGoods. (You can also shop for your home without ever leaving it at www.homegoods.com.) "I believe that people should pamper themselves and give themselves all the amenities possible," he says, "and with HomeGoods it's very affordable," he says.





Left Dressing a bed should be the highlight of your day. Here, a body-hugging McCroskey Airflex mattress lies beneath all those layers of seductive bedding. **Right** Above Take advantage of every available space in a bedroom. Here, a wall has been cleverly converted into a dressing area. **Middle right** A round mirror, like this one, opens a room by bouncing light around. **Below** The classic look of a round pillow with the right textures and patterns can add a touch of luxury to any bed.





Bed Medicine

A great bedroom starts with the bed, and the bed begins with a great mattress. Here, a body-hugging **McCroskey Airflex** mattress lies beneath all those layers of seductive bedding from HomeGoods. Designer Joe Ruggiero equates dressing a bed with wrapping a present, and we can't think of a better gift to give yourself than a bed that looks as good as it feels. Start with the underlayers using an extra soft mattress pad or fluffy feather bed. Build your bedding set around a great duvet, embroidered coverlet, or comforter.



Add luxury with a set of high thread count imported linens and a kaleidoscope of colored accent pillows in different shapes, sizes, and patterns. An attractive bed skirt completes the look and adds elegance. Each layer of the bed adds an element of private luxury to your little sanctuary from the world.

Elsewhere in the room, a big table offers plenty of acreage for stylish lighting, books, and magazines. "Little nightstands are never big enough for alarm clocks and snacks and water and photos," says Ruggiero. Nearby, a large still life (yes, HomeGoods has a great selection of beautiful and unusual wall art, too) brings a bold touch to the dressing area, with its contemporary table and lamps, while a cozy throw makes a white leather reading chair even more enticing.

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Left From shades of green—from apple-colored towels to quietly sage walls—will liven up any permanent, and if you install new fixtures, too, Pacific Sales Kitchen & Bath Centers has all the top brands. **Above** A powder room is an ideal purchase, so find a mirror and vanity to match the space. **Below** Colorful HomeGoods storage boxes help organize the closet full of Brooks Brothers shirts or BCBGirls pumps (shown in roseberry, clora green, and natural).



Bath Sense

In a roomy master bath (another Water Terrace perk), there's plenty of space for accessorizing, and it doesn't take much – a stylish towel basket, a few knick-knacks – to go from blah to spa. For more elaborate upgrades, a good bath fixtures dealer like **Pacific Sales Kitchen and Bath Centers** will have just the right new sink, faucet, cabinet, or tub. If you have a powder room or second bathroom, a dramatic vanity like this carved, marble-topped example from HomeGoods can anchor the space with panache, and a dressing chair creates a glamorous venue for nail filing and shoe fastening. HomeGoods has creative storage ideas that will transform a closet into a colorful, cheery, and organized space. All your hip clothes like crisp **Brooks Brothers** shirts and slinky **BCBGirls** peep-toe pumps – should be right out in the open for easy selection. "I don't think a closet has to be dull and dank," says designer Joe Ruggiero. No chance of that here.

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ABOUT THE DESIGNER

Joe Ruggiero

With nearly three decades of experience, Ruggiero has devoted his wide-ranging career to creating stylish, livable spaces that clients can understand and afford. He has served as the national spokesperson for manufacturers like Glidden, Ethan Allen, and Kohler and pioneered the design show concept that spawned an entire television genre. He also served as editor-in-chief of *Home Magazine* and is the author of design and source book *Found Objects*.

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Playing For Keeps

Michael Maltzan's new Kidspace is a children's museum for all of us by Greg Goldin

ENTERING THE NEW KIDSPACE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM, in the Arroyo Seco—a few thousand parking spaces south of the Rose Bowl—is like sneaking a peek into Mission Control. There is so much to touch and see and do that you freeze. And then you run. At the moment of arrival you emerge from a tapering, compressed passageway onto a platform overlooking a broad plaza. The view is fraught with possibility. Off to one side, an invitation to climb a pair of seemingly tottering, faulty towers. Straight ahead, the temptation to trace the tectonic temperament of the San Andreas Fault. Just below, a few stairsteps away, the urge to romp and twirl in the oak-shaded courtyard. Kidspace sets the stage, not the agenda.

The $18 million museum, designed by Silver Lake architect Michael Maltzan, is a crystalline affirmation that being a kid is everything it's cracked up to be. A deft pairing of old and new, Maltzan's work is proof that complexity can be as much a source of harmony as of dissonance. He reminds us, too, that creative impulses trump received wisdom. If his clean, unadorned aesthetic allowed for it, the entryway would be emblazoned with Pink Floyd's anthem, "Hey, teacher, leave those kids alone!"

Maltzan's career began to take shape during the demise of what he calls the "morass of postmodernism"—the irony-laden movement that believed that the whole had little to do with the sum of the parts. In his best-known work, the Museum of Modern Art's Queens annex, he transformed a hangar-size stapler factory into a building that is experienced rather than viewed. A series of stairs and ramps snaking through the museum offers differing perspectives on the architecture and encourages the patron to participate in the shifting qualities of invented space. In general, Maltzan is looking for a way to engage a building's occupant in a temporal journey with no fixed outcome. A building need not be iconic or crafted out of architectural references to be necessary or relevant.

At Kidspace, which opened in mid-December in Pasadena's Brookside Park, Maltzan extends his point. He has poised the museum inside three 1930s white clapboard hothouses that circumscribe a horseshoe-shaped courtyard. These old buildings, once the Fannie E. Morrison Horticultural Center, enclose the new spaces without swallowing them, while the insertions avoid reducing their hosts to quaint relics. This is accomplished largely by using geometric volumes to modulate the lustrous light that washes down from the original skylights running the length of the buildings' ridgelines. A fourth building, expected to break ground late next year, will surge out of the gentle hill to the east, completing the square. When this 18,000-square-foot exhibition space is done, Maltzan will have created a dynamic whole out of disparate parts.

FOR NOW, YOU PASS through a slot punched into the middle of the largest of the existing structures, the Welcome Pavilion. This hallway, lined with bits of colored, mirrored glass, as in a kaleidoscope, thrusts

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVE LAURIDSEN



SHOCK CORRIDOR: Maltzan's Welcome Pavilion offers a kaleidoscopic view of childhood

you into the courtyard, fresh eyes gazing on a fresh universe. At this moment you are on a slightly raised platform. So begins a consistent feature of Kidspace: movement up and down, with accompanying shifts in height and scale. Uncertainty unleashed.

Looking across the yard, you see a massive live oak framed in the almost weightless embrace of the steel trusses that hold the skylights aloft. The raised patch offers a view of the facade of the building across the way as well as one through the hall into the gardens beyond. This is one of many deliberate connections between inside and out, between lightness as a quality of structure and light as a quality of the senses—a nod not only to certain notions about modern architecture but also to important strains in Southern Californian modern art. The connection is palpable, since much of the museum consists of an outdoor arena sculpted by Nancy Goslee Power into a rising section of the Arroyo, as carefully plotted as an 18th-century English garden.

From the platform and the plaza a few feet below, several choices present themselves. Off to the left, anchoring the crook of two buildings, is the pair of leaning, 30-foot-tall Climbing Towers. Ahead is Digging Deeper, the earthquake-exploration exhibit space. Behind, in the building you've just passed through, are a café, a bookstore, an early-learning center, and events rooms. To the left is the administration building, which, rather than being buried off-site or relegated to the back of the house, faces the public area forthrightly, with functioning windows and doors. In the other direction, toward the hillside, an ancient wisteria arbor can barely be made out—a hint that a less tame hinterland lurks beyond the secure boundaries of the museum walls.

In the courtyard a child can scamper off in any one of many directions, following what Maltzan calls "short circuits," or hew to a prescribed "narrative—this big journey where you start in one place and connect the dots." The space, in other words, is about escaping from your parents' grip or reaching for the comfort of their hands, scaling a tower or going on a guided tour. It is also about layers, whether you swoop through all of them or return repeatedly to one. This admirably suits the mission of the museum and should be more emphatically clear once the fourth building is finished in two years.







UNCERTAINTY UNLEASHED: (clockwise from left) **The Climbing Towers, the Welcome Pavilion, inside one tower**

Maltzan's vision for Kidspace depends on completing the last building. That core structure is made up of a sinuous, bending set of walls and roofs that pinch together, then spread apart, like a wheat grass bouquet. Two distinct volumes barely touch to form one building. Where the halves kiss, a razor-thin slot opens to the sky. A ramp may take you up, then deposit you below. For every angle of approach, a space is redefined. Maltzan does not design for visual pop. In some ways he hopes his elegant sweeps and rigorously scribed lines will disappear, creating another opportunity, both physical and temporal, in which something, anything, can happen.

Maltzan says he is striving for "a sense that there is always something beyond. The space never stops." His scheme is informed by the happy feeling that the future is promising and needs no kibitzing. Maltzan is looking to bestow the expansiveness that comes with genuine freedom, that childhood sensation of time endlessly off the clock.

One potent element of Maltzan's faith is already in place: the Climbing Towers that anchor the corner opposite the proposed core building. They soar over the landscape like medieval turrets. What kid doesn't want to clamber up a lookout that puts the entire province (aka, the adult regime) at his disposal? Visible from the Rose Bowl, the towers tilt, indicating a realm—physical and mental—outside the ordered walls of the museum. Because the towers lean at odds to one another, they have the added effect of forcing you to take the measure of your surroundings. Like the upside-down im-

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ages projected by a camera obscura, the towers discombobulate your set idea of what's normal.

The towers reflect something fundamental in Maltzan's approach to architecture. Here he takes his cues from Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, a 12-foot-high, 120-foot-long curved steel-plate sculpture installed in 1981 in New York City's Federal Plaza. Before its removal in 1989, that pure, minimal object sliced the plaza in half and forced pedestrians to circumvent its oversize bulk. The work, Maltzan says, "put you in a direct physical and visual relationship with your surroundings. How are you immersed in any of your senses and how are you making sense of what's going on around you?" As Serra commented, "The viewer becomes aware of himself and of his movement through the plaza. As he moves, the sculpture changes. Contraction and expansion of the sculpture result from the viewer's movement. Step by step, the perception not only of the sculpture but of the entire environment changes." Maltzan is looking to make similar gestures with as few strokes as possible.

Down in the flats of the Arroyo he has had the confidence to redefine life in a public park. Like the cities in which they sit, parks need an occasional boost, or at least something more than the benign neglect they typically endure. By pushing for architecture that challenges the senses, that is at once simple and complex, Maltzan has added parks to the growing list of public spaces in L.A. where Angelenos will want to be. Rather than spoon-feed our nostalgia by slavishly restoring the old horticultural buildings, he has added new meaning to the Arroyo. Children who visit Kidspace will take away their own memories, fond mementos drawn from an architecture that succeeds, above all, in creating a shared place. Los Angeles continues to put down roots.



NASA/GSFC

IT IS ROCKET SCIENCE: John Parsons (left), Frank Malina (third from left), and fellow flyboys

BOOKS

Love & Rockets

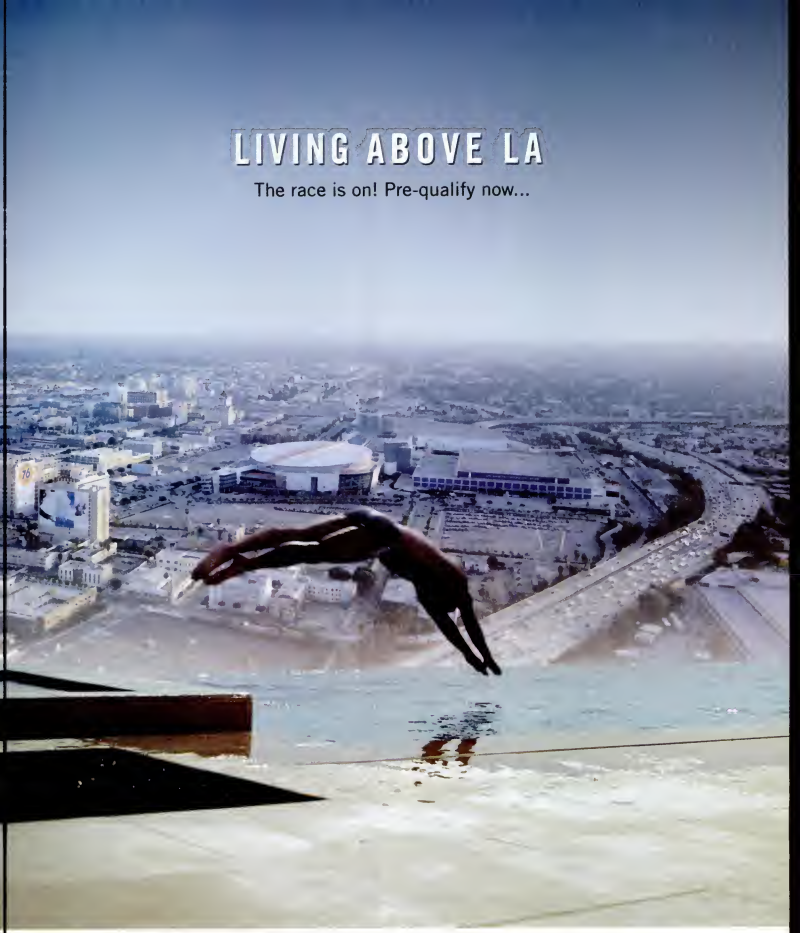
Two new books pick the brains of JPL by Ariel Swartley

IF ICARUS HAD spent more time on prototypes, he never would have gone with wax to hold his wings. But then the world would have lost a great cautionary tale. To the ancient Greeks, Icarus's sin was hubris: He, a mere human, had invaded the flyspace of the gods. To an engineer, however, his failure was one of procedure: There was insufficient testing of key materials and probably some flawed theory as well. (He seems not to have considered that conditions in the stratosphere might be different from those closer to the ground.)

Either way, the willful image of Icarus has forever haunted inventors of flying machines, and probably nowhere is that haunting more evident than in Pasadena, hometown of American rocketry. There, in the 1930s and '40s, in the back corridors of the California Institute of Technology and on dusty test sites along the Arroyo Seco, going to the moon was gradually transformed from a pulp-fiction fantasy into a legitimate research path. The transition was bumpy. The idea of propelling objects beyond Earth's atmosphere struck many scientists as a foolish waste of grown

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men's time. Arguments raged even within the small band of researchers known around campus as the Suicide Squad—who eventually won Caltech's grudging backing. Reckless dreamers battled for ascendancy over dispassionate calculators. Indeed, invention being a creative act, dueling impulses—to bet the farm, to recalibrate the odds—often existed within a single individual.

The most flamboyant of the pyrotechnic wizards we now call rocket scientists ceed at both.

For a pampered child, he was a hard worker. Between occasional college courses and experiments with homemade rockets in the Arroyo, he took jobs in chemical explosives plants—practical learning that would become invaluable to future blastoffs. Equally important, he connected with a Caltech graduate student who was similarly rocket obsessed—the Czechoslovakia- and Texas-raised Frank Malina, who went on to become the first director of



M.G. Lord's most heartfelt topic is how assumptions about the job of science have caused men—including her father—to transform themselves into the human counterpart of machine tools.

was John Whiteside Parsons, subject of George Pendle's biography *Strange Angel* (Harcourt, 368 pages, $25). Forget geek stereotypes. Parsons's life seems straight out of a Hollywood thriller. A wealthy dandy and brilliant self-taught chemist, he had a thing for explosions. Those that he controlled through his experiments with liquid- and solid-state fuels in a Caltech machine shop made jet propulsion—and therefore space travel—possible. Those that he conjured in his Orange Grove Boulevard bedroom to summon the devil propelled him into the leadership of an Aleister Crowley–inspired sex-and-magic cult. And one explosion, set off accidentally while working for a Hollywood special-effects shop, killed him in 1952 at the age of 37.

In Pendle's telling, down-to-earth was never an option for Parsons. An only child whose father had been banished a year after his birth for dallying with prostitutes, he grew up in a 20-room Italianate fantasyland in Pasadena, doted on by his mother and maternal grandparents. He had books instead of friends (tales of King Arthur and the science fiction in *Amazing Stories* were his favorite reading) and tutors instead of schoolmates. Space travel, black magic? Nothing in Parsons's upbringing led him to believe that he couldn't succ-

Pasadena's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Malina, a trained engineer, was the slow-burning fuse to Parsons's TNT, an abstract theoretician to Parsons's hands-on innovator. Their differences sparked each other to solutions. Malina was also a university insider, able to negotiate deals for research facilities and present a credentialed face to government and private investors. By 1942, the men were partners in the Aerojet Engineering Corporation, whose propulsion systems have since been part of every manned space vehicle America has launched. By the mid-1950s, neither was working in the field they'd helped found.

Pendle, a science writer for *The Times* of London, understands the art of translating technicalities into lay terms. "Parsons," he writes, "had learned how to control explosions, to temper their bite, and to recognize their character. To him, an explosion was not a violent and meaningless release of energy but a dance of expansion." It's the chemist's other life, though, that pulls the reader along: the monthly meetings of Hollywood's Thelema Society, whose mostly gray-haired members turned themselves during onstage sex rituals into sword-bearing priestesses and snake-crowned magi; the parties Parsons threw in the fading mansion he and other society members shared in Pasadena, physicists and burlesque dancers rubbing shoulders and more in lantern-lit gardens; or the blunt way he announced to his wife that he preferred her teenage sister "sexually," only to have this new partner stolen away, just as coolly, by L. Ron Hubbard, still a science-fiction novelist and not yet Scientology's founder.

Parsons was largely a burnt-out case before his final explosion, a persona non grata at JPL (for, among other things, the sexual hounding of secretaries). Malina was driven out of government work in the 1950s because of his leftist leanings. Eventually he gave up science altogether in favor of art. Pendle would like to make *Strange Angel* a morality tale: either about California (thanks to the destabilizing effects of its rootless population, the epic scenery, yada yada) or about the dangers of academic science and its distrust of visionaries. But in the end his subject defeats him. Parsons's life is too idiosyncratic and too pathological to illustrate anything but his own genius.

GROWING UP with an engineer for a father, you learn early that details have giant consequences. If you fail to lubricate a bicycle chain, depress a clutch, return the scissors to the left-hand corner of the second drawer, you invite disaster—and not just personally. You have imperiled the proper working of the world. As "cognizant hardware engineer for mechanical devices," M.G. Lord's father designed doohickeys that fastened solar panels to the skin of the spacecraft that ferried the cameras that the *Mariner 69* probe would use to study Mars. Like many postindustrial jobs, Charles Lord's put him on the cutting edge of history while reducing him to a contract-working cog in the machine.

As Lord observes in *Astro Turf* (Walker & Company, 272 pages, $24), the shift of rocket science from the "domain of kooks, nuts, wackos, and science-fiction writers" in the 1930s to its midcentury guise of meth-





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BRIEFS

California Dreamers

FRANK BONES HAD BEEN A MODERATELY successful stand-up comedian before an unfortunate incident with a loaded firearm—his—derailed his career. Four years and countless Giggle Shack gigs later, Bones is given a second chance when he is offered his own sitcom playing a "hip Eskimo" alongside an animatronic walrus. Seth Greenland's *The Bones* (Bloomsbury, 400 pages, $25) is a hilarious meditation on selling out in Hollywood, funny in that cluelessly mean, "What'd I do?" Larry David kind of way. Greenland presents a world peopled with groupies, brain-dead leading men, and uncharitable charity fund-raiser hosts. Unfortunately, the least humorous parts of the book are the stand-up bits, parts that, like Travolta's first dance in *Saturday Night Fever*, are fundamental to our belief in the hero. They're funny but not laugh-out-loud funny, a reminder of how much of live comedy is timing and delivery and making faces, elements tough to re-create on the printed page.



UPTON SINCLAIR IS BEST KNOWN for his 1906 novel *The Jungle*, an exposé of the meatpacking industry that predated PETA and *Super Size Me* by almost a century. He spent much of his life and career in Southern California, where the celebrated muckraker and Pulitzer-winning novelist did some of his angriest and most creative work. *The Land of Orange Groves and Jails* (Heyday Books, 215 pages, $17) features highlights from Sinclair's plays, novels, and nonfiction, including his EPIC manifesto—a plan to "End Poverty in California" that accompanied his controversial gubernatorial run in 1934—and a scathing piece about William Randolph Hearst, a paunchy, sagging man "with no hopes for this world or the next," and the "courtiers and sycophants" who surrounded him at San Simeon.



LOS ANGELES HAS BECOME A HOTBED of fine alternative comics. Veterans Tony Millionaire and the Hernandez brothers may be the scene's godfathers, but thirty-ish artists from Johnny Ryan (*Angry Youth Comix*) to Dame Darcy (*Meat Cake*) to Martin Cendreda (*Dang!*) are transforming it. This month Jordan Crane, the editor of the celebrated comics anthology *Non*, delivers *The Clouds Above* (Fantagraphics, 416 pages, $17), an all-ages story about a boy, a cat, a vicious teacher, a flock of even more vicious birds, and a staircase that stretches into the stratosphere. In Crane's fantastic world—reminiscent of those of Tim Burton, Lewis Carroll, and *Little Nemo in Slumberland* creator Winsor McCay—amiable clouds can spin their heads like propellers, and lines like "Stick ME in your crumby cloud gut? I'll punch you" make perfect sense. —*Robert Ito*



odical, steely-eyed men at Mission Control was more than a natural evolution from creative spark to practical application. The cold war had replaced the idealism of space travel with the urgency of space domination. Former Nazis like Wernher von Braun, whose rocket research had been devoted to weaponry, were forgiven, feted, and funded in postwar America, while former socialist Malina was forced to give up even his humanitarian scientific work with UNESCO.

Lord's book is subtitled *The Private Life of Rocket Science*, and her most heartfelt topic is how assumptions about the job of science have caused men—including her father—to transform themselves into the human counterpart of machine tools: hyperrational, unfeeling, used only for work.

Part memoir, part investigative journalism, part cultural history of the Jet Propulsion Lab, *Astro Turf* is more space probe than guided missile. The chronology is not always clear, but the pictures it delivers—a sensitivity-training exercise with JPL engineers, Malina's after-rocket life as a kinetic sculptor in France—are poignant and illuminating. As a man who understood that successful science has a human as well as a theoretical aspect, Malina is the central heroic figure in *Astro Turf* (and American rocket research) rather than the administrative thwart to Parsons's thrust that he so often appears to be in *Strange Angel*.

Lord's previous book, *Forever Barbie*, examined the hipless plastic talisman of her childhood as an icon of femininity. What interests her in *Astro Turf* is the "disparity between the stereotype of the cold war–era rocket engineer and the men (and more recently women) who have actually built spacecraft." Some of Lord's most powerful encounters are with women like Donna Shirley, who broke JPL's gender barrier to become director of the Mars Exploration Program. She's tough and techie enough to manage guys who, like Lord's father, grew up thinking puberty in a woman was a sign that her brain was no longer capable of solving equations. When Lord found her, though, Shirley was teaching JPL programmers and engineers how to construct a metaphor. To understand the complexities of their work, she tells them, they have to find ways to translate abstract ideas into original language.

If no one can explain what takes place at that instant of conception when a crazy dream of flying becomes an actual sequence of problems to solve, both Lord's and Pendle's books leave us with a taste of genius's energy and fragility. Maybe more important, they remind us that in many respects, rocket scientists are no different from the rest of us. Trying to align messy human drives and contradictions into some sleek, ever-forward-thrusting modern package, the men in these books wind up confusing their work with who they are.

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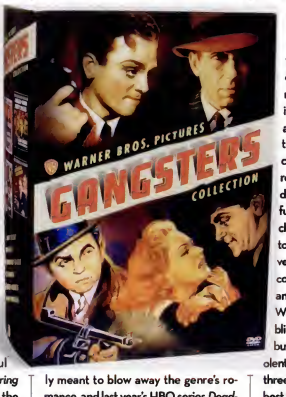
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Crooks Illustrated

WARNER BROS.' NEW DVD set of gangster films from the 1930s and '40s isn't the windfall that last year's similar film noir set from the same studio was, but it comes close. The six volumes (also available individually) include 1930's *Little Caesar*, which immortalized Edward G. Robinson right down to his strangled death cry—"Mother of mercy, is this the end of Rico?"—and 1936's *The Petrified Forest*, in which Humphrey Bogart made his first indelible impression on movie audiences as a glowering escaped con with a million-dollar sneer and a soft spot. Bogart had played the part in the Robert Sherwood play on Broadway, and the lead, Leslie Howard, demanded that his costar be cast in the film role as well, to Bogart's enduring gratitude; almost 20 years later he named his daughter (by Lauren Bacall) Leslie. *The Petrified Forest* and *Little Caesar* aside, the *Warner Bros. Pictures Gangsters Collection* is a mini James Cagney festival, with 1938's *Angels with Dirty Faces*, where the tough guy's bravest act is a show of cowardice on his way to the electric chair, and William Wellman's epochal *The Public Enemy*, a 1931 film that now seems uneven but is full of brilliant bits such as a climactic shoot-out that's somehow all the more riveting for how you never actually see it. The two must-haves of the set, both directed by Raoul Walsh, are the underrated *The Roaring Twenties* from 1939 (with Bogart in the second lead and a wonderful supporting performance by Gladys George) and *White Heat* from a decade later, with a Cagney tour de force that goes beyond the primal into the oedipal, or is it the other way around? Both feature a couple of the most extraordinary death scenes in movie history. Peter Bogdanovich has reported that Cagney based them on personally having witnessed the death of a gorilla and the way the animal died not only slowly but—in Cagney's word—*amazed*.

THE REVISIONIST western was one of those ideas that seemed revolutionary in the 1960s, even as those filmmakers "revising" it (Sergio Leone, Sam Peckinpah, Robert Altman) were really only replacing old myths with their own. Clint Eastwood's 1992 *Unforgiven* may have been the first major western that actually meant to blow away the genre's romance, and last year's HBO series *Deadwood*, now on DVD, picks up where *Unforgiven* left off—in the mud. In fact, *Deadwood* has to be the muddiest series in 50 years of television, and a testament to what a dirty business taming the West was; the cleanest place in town is the brothel, and the second cleanest is the other brothel. When *Deadwood* first aired, there was some furor about the language that's so profane it quickly becomes a kind of shtick; one particularly vivid obscenity (three syllables, the first beginning with c and the last ending with *r*) gets more use than in the whole history of film and television, Martin Scorsese's movies included. In one episode a conversation consisting almost entirely of this one word takes place between a disgruntled Chinese businessman and the town boss, the too aptly named saloon keeper and pimp Al Swearengen (Ian McShane), the dark satanic overlord except on those occasions, such as the final episode, when he's a dark angel of mercy. Capturing a moment in America's story when mining camps like Deadwood were merely anarchy with addresses, before "civilization" (merely bureaucracy with pretensions) imposed itself, the show feels claustrophobic and sometimes as if it's running just to stay in place—then slips into the class of near-masterpiece, characters revealing complexities they don't understand themselves. *Deadwood* is full of great ensemble acting that includes Brad Dourif as the doctor up to his elbows in blood and tumors and venereal disease, more the rock of his community than he knows; a fabulous and all-too-brief Keith Carradine as Wild Bill Hickok, weary, soul-sick, going blind, and ready to die with his times; but especially McShane in all his malevolent charisma, wheeling and dealing and three moves ahead of everyone, with the best line in the series that comes in its final moments: "Announcing your plans is a good way to hear God laugh." What can it mean that he was introduced to American audiences on PBS three decades ago playing British prime minister Benjamin Disraeli, the most Machiavellian politician of his day? —*Steve Erickson*



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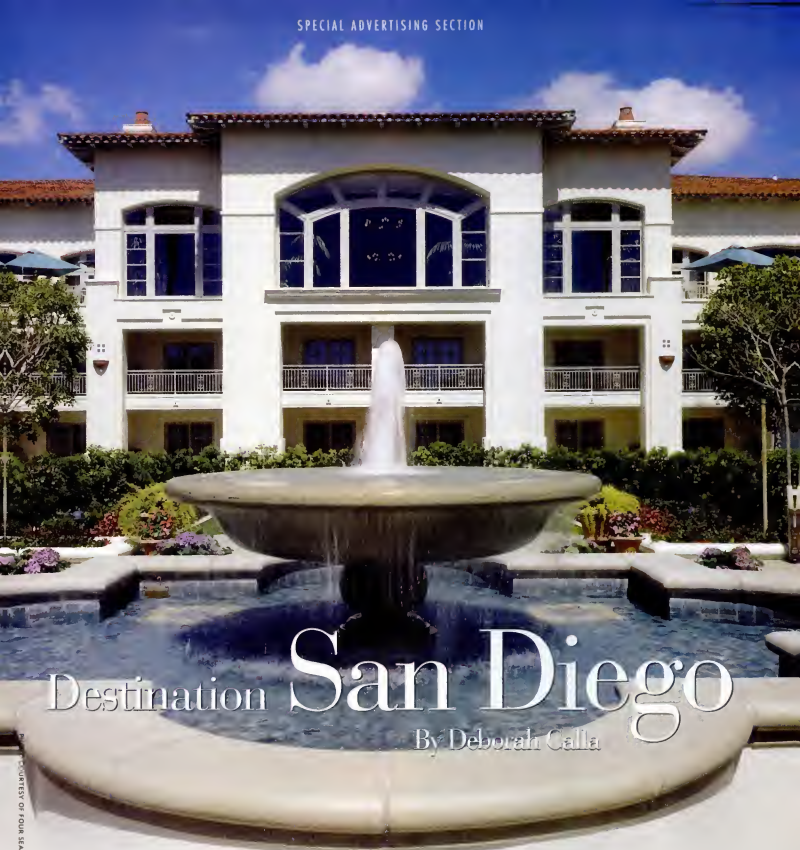
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Destination San Diego

By Deborah Calla

WE ANGELENOS LIVE IN A PLACE THAT MOST OF THE YEAR – AND WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ASSORTED URBAN ILLS AND THE RECENT DELUGE – COMES PRETTY CLOSE TO LIVING UP TO THE LABEL OF "PARADISE." We are, after all, a top destination for people from all over the world, travelers who come to enjoy our beaches, our restaurants, our cultural institutions.

So where do we go when we need to escape? Many of us head south. Not south of the border, but just down near the border: San Diego. The city down the 405, once viewed as a sleepy town full of retired military families, has blossomed. Nearly 30 million tourists descend on San Diego annually, and almost 50% of them come from the greater Los Angeles area, according to Susan Bruinzeel, Director of Market Intelligence for the city's Convention & Visitors Bureau.

San Diego today is no longer the small town it was when I was growing up in Southern California in the '60s. It has finally become a big city – but one that feels like a resort. It's easy to see why we head there year-round



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When it comes to dining, shopping, and nightlife, you can't go wrong in the historic Gaslamp District. The once-derelict area is now the pride of the city, with 16 blocks of boutiques, bars, hotels, and restaurants. Also worth a trip is the Ocean Beach Antique District, home to the largest concentration of dealers of antiques and collectibles in San Diego County. You'll find everything from vintage jewelry to mid-century furniture along Newport Avenue.

Spring brings unique pleasures to San Diego. At the top of that list must be the riot of color that begins to bloom each March when wildflowers poke up out of the ground. You'll find them growing freely if you head inland past Julian, an historic mining town, to the Anza Borrego State Park. Or you can find them in abundance for a fee at The Flower Fields (5704 Paseo Del Norte, 760-431-0352) in Carlsbad, a private facility open this year from March 12 through May 8. You can wander for hours among 50 acres of Technicolor-bright Ranunculus, intoxicated as Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, as she strolled through the poppies.

Whale watching is popular here, and the season runs from December through April. Cruises lasting several hours can be booked through any hotel concierge. The best of these can get you up close and personal with the massive and fascinating California Grey Whales.

Visit the San Diego Padres in their stylish new home at PETCO Park, a truly lovely stadium where the action feels close from almost any seat. The Spring training exhibition schedule starts March 1, so check to see if there's a game at PETCO during your visit.







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The idea of San Diego as a fine dining destination may be recent, but it's now undeniable as many of the area's 6,400 eating establishments have attained national recognition. Restaurants like George's at the Cove (1250 Prospect St., La Jolla, 858-454-4244) take advantage of local bounty, from seafood to produce, to offer not just some of the best food in Southern California but in the whole country. Chef Trey Foshee, who previously cooked at L'Orangerie in West Hollywood and Three Three in Downtown was named a "Top Ten Chef" by *Food & Wine*. Mr. Foshee bought a home near legendary Chino Farms so he could stop in every day on his way to work to pick up the vegetables he'll cook that night.

Bradley Ogden made his name in the Bay Area, and now he can be found here, too, at Arterra (11966 El Camino Reol, Del Mar, 858-369-6032). As with the other places in Ogden's Lork Creek group, it's contemporary, all-American farm-fresh cuisine, with a seasonal menu that relies on Chino Farms and other local purveyors for exceptional produce.

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The Lodge at Torrey Pines


Hotel Del Coronado

San Diego offers endless opportunities for family fun in the sun.

Roppongi (875 Prospect St., La Jolla, 858-551-5252), with a menu of Asian-inspired tapas as well as a Raw Bar offering oysters on the half shell and steamers alongside sushi bar favorites including hand-cut spicy tuna rolls.

There's no shortage of places to stay, both new and old. Hotel Del Coronado, although built in 1888, combines the best of the historic and the contemporary. After recently completing a $55 million restoration, guest rooms in the original Victorian Building include 300 thread count Egyptian linens, high speed internet access, and more. In addition to its spa and Prince of Wales restaurant, the hotel is notable for its Victorian architecture and a truly grand elevator in the lobby.

The Lodge at Torrey Pines feels like it's been around forever, but the 171-room Craftsman-style building was completed in 2002. The AAA Five Diamond Resort is home to AR Valentien, a gourmet restaurant with an all-California wine list, as well as The Spa at Torrey Pines, which uses local plants and marine-based extracts in many of its treatments. All kinds of plants can be seen on hikes in the adjacent Torrey Pines State Reserve, with trails leading down to the beach. Best of all, at least for golfers, is the promise of preferred tee times at adjacent Torrey Pines Golf Course. One of the finest courses in the country, it is the site of the 2008 US Open.

Nature is the key to the Four Seasons Aviara, which opened on a bluff overlooking the Batiquitos Lagoon in 1997. The 329-guest room Five Diamond resort is home to the Arnold Palmer-designed Aviara Golf Club. Vivace offers Northern Italian cuisine and a first-rate wine list mostly culled from California wineries, but featuring more than a few choice bottles from Italy as well. The spa was renovated just a couple of years ago, and an infinity-edge pool overlooking the ocean three miles in the distance was added.

Looking for something a bit different? Check out the Barona Valley Ranch Resort & Casino. The 397-room property, situated about half an hour inland from Downtown San Diego, has a highly regarded golf course and several fine restaurants. But what really sets it apart is gaming: the two-year-old hotel, owned by the Barona Band of Mission Indians, has a 300,000 square-foot casino with more than 70 table games.

Whenever you choose to visit and wherever you choose to stay, San Diego offers endless opportunities for family fun in the sun.

DESTINATION SAN DIEGO RESOURCE GUIDE

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1932 Wildcat Canyon Road
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www.barona.com

Four Seasons Resort Aviara, North San Diego
7100 Four Seasons Point
Carlsbad, CA 92009
(760) 603-6800
www.fourseasons.com/aviara

Hotel del Coronado
1500 Orange Avenue
Coronado, CA 92118
(800) HOTELDEL
www.hoteldel.com

The Lodge at Torrey Pines
11480 North Torrey Pines Road
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www.lodgetorreypines.com

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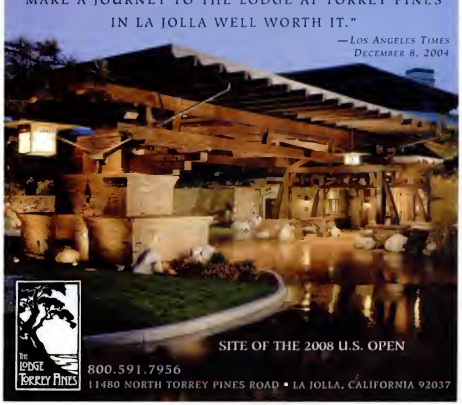
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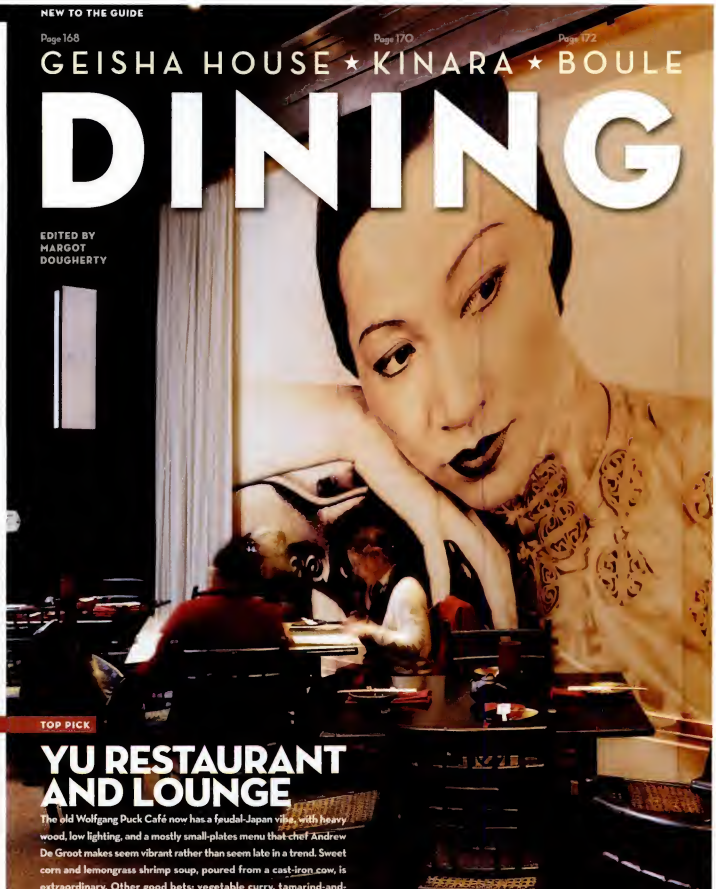

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NEW TO THE GUIDE

Page 168 GEISHA HOUSE ★ Page 170 KINARA ★ Page 172 BOULE

DINING

EDITED BY MARGOT DOUGHERTY



TOP PICK

YU RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE

The old Wolfgang Puck Café now has a feudal-Japan vibe, with heavy wood, low lighting, and a mostly small-plates menu that chef Andrew De Groot makes seem vibrant rather than seem late in a trend. Sweet corn and lemongrass shrimp soup, poured from a cast-iron cow, is extraordinary. Other good bets: vegetable curry, tamarind-and-pomegranate-glazed quail, oyster shooters with sake and chile, sushi, and roast chicken with *mirin*-shiitake relish. *1323 Montana Ave., Santa Monica (310-395-4727). L Tue.–Sun.; D nightly. Full bar. Asian $$$*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **EDMUND BARR**

BACK AGAIN

Westwood, Go!

It's a brand-new day at the Napa Valley Grille, thanks to the arrival of chef Anne Conness

It's tempting to say the phoenix has risen from the ashes at the Napa Valley Grille. But Westwood's attempt at a middle-of-the-road fine-dining restaurant never had a phoenix. It never had much of an identity at all. Part of an Emeryville-based corporation that also owns Café del Rey in the Marina and counts real estate and biotech enterprises among its holdings, the Grille and its handsome-enough flow of dining rooms had an indelible corporate tinge—an entryway shop sold olive oils and barely related accoutrements, including soap. The food, while not horrible, had little to recommend it besides being a cut above the surrounding taco joints and pizzerias. Since the arrival of chef Anne Conness six months ago—she was the opening chef and spirit behind EM Bistro—the restaurant has become an entirely different place.



SAVING GRACE: Conness in her element

The shop is gone. At lunchtime the rooms, flooded with light, are noticeably animated with Westwood shoppers and business types making their way through substantial salads of grilled scallops, golden beets, and arugula or marinated skirt steak, napa cabbage, carrots, and peanuts or combo plates that are something like grown-up Happy Meals. The Calistoga, for example, consists of half a hearty turkey sandwich, a green salad, and a cup of the day's soup served side by side on a rectangular white plate. Conness's Angus cheeseburger—with bacon, Gruyère, and red onion marmalade—won't be mistaken for anything you can get at a drive-thru.

Come dinnertime Napa Valley Grille is now a sophisticated destination, not just a conveniently located compromise for a pre-movie rendezvous. Detail is evident in even the simplest dishes. A butter lettuce salad with paper-thin slices of pear is arranged like a rosette and sprinkled with pomegranate seeds and blue cheese. A small mound of shaved baby artichoke is piled on a rich risotto cake, and tuna tartare, whose spike of jalapeño is absorbed by a cushion of avocado, comes in a tower layered with squares of mille-feuille. A standard selection of artisanal cheeses is listed as a second course, which is awkward but presumably can be had anytime. It's with the entrées that Conness gets to stretch. A roast pork tenderloin with mushroom-potato gratin and Madeira prune reduction does the other white meat proud and, like her New Zealand snapper served with yellow raisin-caper vinaigrette and cauliflower baked in béchamel, shows how a chef can get creative without leaving the diner behind. *—M.D.*

1100 Glendon Ave., Westwood (310-824-3322 or www.constellationconcepts.com). L-D daily. Full bar. American $$$

DOWNTOWN & MID CITY

CAFE PINOT This Joachim Splichal spot is situated in a glass box next to the Central Library. The food is Splichal lite—eccentrically delicious Provençal-California cooking. 700 W. 5th St. (213-239-6500 or www.patinagroup.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. California/French Bistro $$$

CIUDAD The tortilla soup at Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger's downtown place is a star. Follow with Argentine empanadas, Swiss chard with tomatillo sauce, or Brazilian *moqueca*—mussels, shrimp, and other seafood in a coconut-lime broth over coconut rice. Shuttle service to nearby theaters is available. Union Bank Plaza, 445 S. Figueroa St. (213-486-5171 or www.ciudad-la.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Latin $$$

L.A. PRIME The view? Breathtaking. The cuisine? Carnivores only. The service? Waiters in white jackets. When you peel your eyes off the 360-degree views at 35 floors up, it might be for Maine lobster bisque or meat with a side of meat: veal Oscar, bone-in prime porterhouse, beef Wellington. Dessert is simple: fudge brownie with vanilla ice cream, caramelized bananas, and pecans. The revolving BonaVista lounge next door is a hoot. Westin Bonaventure Hotel, 404 S. Figueroa St. (213-612-4743 or www.starwoodhotels.com). D nightly. Full bar. Steak House $$$

NICK & STEF'S STEAKHOUSE At Joachim Splichal's steak house, giant cuts of beef hang in a glass-walled aging chamber, and the service in the moderne dining room is flawless. Meats are cooked perfectly, the artichoke gratin is richly indulgent, and the lemon meringue pie is a perfect coda. Wells Fargo Building, 330 S. Hope St. (213-680-0330 or www.patinagroup.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Steak House $$$$

PATINA Joachim Splichal's restaurant at Disney Hall is a stunner. Imagine chestnut soup with truffled cream, pheasant with apple-champagne sauerkraut, sautéed blue prawns with creamy polenta, caramelized apples with a crescent of linzer dough and ice cream. This is a grand-occasion restaurant, ideal for drinks or supper before or after a show. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 141 S. Grand Ave. (213-972-3331 or www.patinagroup.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Cal-French $$$$

PETE'S CAFÉ AND BAR Envision red ceilings, low lights, jazz music, and alcoholic egg creams. It's upscale pub food here: mac and cheese with Vermont cheddar, Asiago, and chèvre; barbecued lamb ribs; braised veal porpie; and for dessert, homemade bread pudding. 400 S. Main St. (213-617-1000). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. American Bistro $$

THE RESTAURANT It's mellow yellow in this mod, '60s-style hotel diner where the food is all about comfort: *croque monsieur*, roast pork with caramelized apples.

THESE LISTINGS are a guide to establishments reviewed and recommended by our dining critics and staff and have no relationship to any advertising in Los Angeles magazine. Visits are anonymous, and all expenses are paid by the magazine.

Price classifications are approximate and are based on a typical three-course dinner for one person, exclusive of drinks, tax, and tip; unless otherwise noted, these restaurants accept most credit cards.

Key to Symbols

($) Inexpensive – *Dinner under $15*
($$) Moderate – *Mostly under $25*
($$$) Expensive – *Mostly under $50*
($$$$) Very expensive – *$50 and over*

B Breakfast **L** Lunch **D** Dinner

WE WELCOME your comments and suggestions. Please write c/o "Dining Out," Los Angeles magazine, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., 10th floor, Los Angeles, CA 90036; or e-mail us at letters@lamag.com.

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Dessert? *Mochi* ball ice cream. At night a DJ spins in the lobby. **Downtown Standard, 550 S. Flower St. (213-892-8080 or www.standardhotel.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. International $$$**

R-23 One of the best sushi bars in L.A. is hidden in this artsy district and sports cardboard furniture, exposed brick, and chefs who make miracles out of fish and rice. **923 E. 2nd St. (213-687-7178 or www.r23.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese $$$**

SAI SAI After a greeting from a kimonoed hostess, you're seated and the show begins: an exquisite four-course chef's menu, starting with sweet and smoky miso eggplant and ending with crème brûlée. The sashimi is lovely, as are the more involved *kaiseki* dinners, and the staff makes you feel like you've been coming for years. **Millennium Biltmore Hotel, 506 S. Olive St. (213-624-1100 or www.millenniumhotels.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese $$$**



NEW

Geisha House

A film set or a restaurant? Two levels for celeb watching, a DJ spinning at a table above the dining room, and a column enclosing six fireplaces that shoots up to the ceiling. Everyone is bathed in the pink light of a Tokyo cityscape, lit pictures of a geisha putting on her makeup, and candles. Beautiful crowd and about $25,000 worth of skinny jeans in the room. The food more than holds up its end: Marilyn Monrolls (soy paper, crab, *tobiko*, lettuce, and sprouts), grilled Mongolian lamb chop with sweet miso, and cucumber-*shiso* leaf salad. Everyone is thin enough to deserve the molten chocolate cake. **6633 *Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood (323-460-6300 or www.geishahousehollywood.com). D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Modern Japanese $$$***

WATER GRILL The room is sophisticated if somewhat businesslike, but the food is why you're here. Choices include top-notch oysters and an exquisite menu of fresh fish. The wine list is first-rate, as is the chocolate bread pudding. **544 S. Grand Ave. (213-891-0900 or www.kingsseafood.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Seafood $$$**

LOS FELIZ & SILVER LAKE

CLIFF'S EDGE The sprawling hillside patio at this new Silver Lake hideaway lights up at night like the Swiss Family Robinson's cafeteria, but the fare here never touches a steam table: small dishes of ricotta *bruschetta* topped with marinated grapes, savory pumpkin ravioli, and a perfect plate of sliced grilled sirloin and melted Gorgonzola. Weekend brunches feature crepes sweet and light enough to guarantee Silver Lake's status as L.A.'s own Left Bank. **3626 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-666-6116). D Mon.–Sat.; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. Cal-Italian $$**

EDENDALE GRILL There's a speakeasy in the bar to this old firehouse turned restaurant. Eat inside or out, or just liquidate yourself at the 38-foot bar. Good choices include crab cakes with tequila-lime sauce, baked sea scallops, molasses-glazed salmon, and seared trout with applewood-smoked bacon. **2838 Rowena Ave. (323-666-2000 or www.edendalegrill.com). D nightly. Full bar. American $$$**

FRED 62 Chef Fred Eric and designer Fred Sutherland created a menu of tweaked diner grub: chewy Korean potato-starch noodles, tofu scramble, smoked salmon sandwiches, even homemade Pop-Tarts. This retro joint is cool 24 hours a day. **1850 N. Vermont Ave. (323-667-0062). B-L-D 24 hours daily. Beer and wine. Eclectic Diner $**

MEXICO CITY The decor is '50s Naugahyde, the crowd Los Feliz hipster, and the menu atypical. The spinach enchilada—with a cheesecloth sauce of *mole*, guajillo chiles, sour cream, and onions—best shows off the kitchen's ability. Carnivores will like the *cochinita pibil* (Yucatán-style marinated pork). **2121 Hillhurst Ave. (323-661-7227). L Wed.–Sun.; D nightly. Full bar. Mexican $**

VERMONT The place is buzzing with regulars, the owners are in the house, and the food falls in the well-prepared standard-bearers category: poached salmon, beef fillet, roast chicken. A shrimp and arugula salad has a citrus zip, and the flourless chocolate cake is waiting patiently. **1714 N. Vermont Ave. (323-661-6163 or www.vermontrestaurantonline.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. Cal-French $$$**

HOLLYWOOD & MELROSE

AGO At this sleek showcase (co-owned by Robert De Niro), pastas are served piping hot and perfectly cooked and pizzas come direct from a brick oven. Entrées include the likes of monkfish with creamy polenta and baby rack of lamb. **8478 Melrose Ave. (323-655-6333). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Tuscan $$$**

AMMO Amy Sweeney's restaurant now has a liquor license, a bar, cushy banquettes, and an all-grown-up feel. At lunch there's black bean soup with avocado, tasty salads and loaded sandwiches. Oversize chocolate chip cookies will neutralize any smugness about the healthy eating. At night the food, including the pizzas, is what regulars have come to expect: a sophisticated version of creative home cooking. **7155 N. Highland Ave. (323-871-2666 or www.ammocafe.com). L–D Mon.–Fri.; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. American Bistro $$$**

BASTIDE Chef Ludovic Lefebvre, formerly of L'Orangerie, has turned Bastide on its head. Forget the traditional French menu. Instead consider foie gras with dollops of pineapple foam and coconut sorbet, or cauliflower soup with oysters, bacon foam, and black truffle coulis. Lobster comes in three dishes, with a different preparation for the tail, knuckles, and claws. As usual, the service and surroundings are sterling. The food is the most creative in L.A. today. **8475 Melrose Pl. (323-651-5950). D Tue.–Sat. Full bar. Avant-Garde French $$$$**

CAMPANILE This standard-bearer has been on the top tier of L.A.'s restaurant hierarchy since day one. The menu presents seasonal ingredients at their best and brightest, which might mean cedar-smoked trout with fennel salad, rosemary-charred lamb with artichokes, or sour cherry brioche. **624 S. La Brea Ave. (323-938-1447 or www.campanilerestaurant.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. Cal-Mediterranean $$$**

CHAMEAU A Silver Lake staple has moved west into a mod, the-Jetsons-go-to-Marrakech space with booths on one side, a banquette on the other. You'll see the same staff, get the same warm greeting, and recognize the menu: grilled *merguez* sausage with chickpea puree, duck *bastilla*, and *poussin* with saffron, green olives, and mushrooms. The condiments—*chermoula*, *harissa*—are spicy and authentic, and now there's a beer and wine license, too. **339 N. Fairfax Ave. (323-951-0039 or www.chameaurestaurant.com). D Tue.– Sun. Beer and wine. French Moroccan $$**

DOLCE The Dodd Mitchell interior is the biggest statement at this haunt for the PYT set—black leather chairs and table covers, a bar backlit by a wall of flames, and a second open-air dining area. Think Ling The Next Generation. The food, ostensibly Italian, takes a backseat to the scene. **8284 Melrose Ave. (323-852-7174 or www.dolceenoteca.com). D nightly. Full bar. Italian $$$**

DOUG ARANGO'S Oodles of thick candles are scattered around a big room with an enormous stone fireplace, and it doesn't ever seem to get noisy even when full. The menu is comfy: shepherd's pie, Lake Superior whitefish, liver and onions, broccoli and brown rice with tofu. **8826 Melrose Ave. (310-278-3684). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. California $$$**

GRUB The atmosphere is cafeteria casual, and the name explains the aim—basic good food. Tuck into omelettes, French toast, Mamacita's Breakfast Burritos, and French vanilla oatmeal with caramelized bananas. Or sloppy joes, chicken *muffaletta* wraps, and tuna melts with two pestos. Choose among an ice cream float, homemade ginger ale, and blueberry lemonade. **911 N. Seward St. (323-461-3663 or www.grub-la.com). B-L Mon.–Fri. No alcohol. American $**

LUCQUES Highlights at Suzanne Goin's foodie mecca include braised beef short ribs with potato puree, greens, and horseradish cream and a prix fixe menu that features the chef's specialties (Devil's Chicken) and changes weekly. **8474 Melrose Ave. (323-655-6277 or www.lucques.com). L Tue.–Sat.; D nightly. Full bar. French-Mediterranean $$$**

LUNA PARK A bar lines one wall, booths take up another, and simple tables fill the middle. Soups, salads, and comfort foods—goat cheese fondue, Monte Cristo sandwiches (at lunch), pork cutlets—are the draw. So are s'mores—with homemade graham crackers. **672 S. La Brea Ave. (323-934-2110 or www.lunaparkla.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. American $$**

MINIBAR It's Stanley Kubrick meets Willy Wonka—all chocolate browns, aquas, and white leatherette. Small plates include yucca flour biscuits flavored with smoky Gouda, saffron risotto, duck egg rolls, and beer salad. Desserts are even more mod: *café con leche* (chilled coffee-caramel pudding) and a marshmallow stew (two tiny bowls of homemade marshmallows and a teapot full of thick chocolate). Sandwiches and salads at lunch. **3413 Cahuenga Blvd. West (323-882-6965 or www.minibarlounge.com). L Wed.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Full Bar. Small Plates $$**

MUSSO & FRANK GRILL The oldest restaurant in Hollywood remains a dark, imposing landmark serving flannel cakes in the morning, short ribs at night, and the martini against which all others must be judged. The waiters are gruff, experienced, and perfect. Pure Raymond Chandler. **6667 Hollywood Blvd. (323-467-7788). B-L-D Tue.–Sat. Full bar. Continental $$$**

PINOT HOLLYWOOD This Joachim Splichal outpost has a pun-filled menu and serious food and wine. Try the crab-and-risotto cake, bacon-wrapped steak with mushroom mashedo, or veal short ribs with pumpkin ravioli. Nice walled-in patio, too. **1444 N. Gower St. (323-461-8800 or www.patinagroup.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Cal-French $$$**



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TOKIO The name in the window is the size of Paris Hilton's thong, so look for the bouncer and the paper umbrella over the door. Inside, tofu-and-seaweed salads, miso-marinated cod, spicy tuna rolls, and chicken teriyaki are served at intimate tables for two, and the trendy sit on cushions in a private back room. A bright sushi bar punctuates the dark lounge. 1640 N. Cahuenga Blvd. (323-464-2065). D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Japanese $$$

WHITE LOTUS There's a trendy crowd, velvet ropes, VIP areas, and an adjoining club. The sushi bar has 50 kinds of sake, and the room gets louder as it gets later—most diners consider 10 p.m. an early reservation. Dishes of note: duck leg confit with *soba* and sesame-crusted halibut with coconut and Kaffir lime sticky rice. 1743 N. Cahuenga Blvd. (323-463-0060 or www.whitelotushollywood.com). D Tue.–Sat. Full bar. Euro-Asian $$$

LA CIENEGA & WEST HOLLYWOOD

ANGELINI OSTERIA The place is tiny, the kitchen is open, the room is busy, and everyone raves about the food. The menu's written in a pastiche of Italian (*taglierino con salumi e burrata*) and English (pork chop with red cabbage and apple). A special of polenta, olives, and scallops is divinity on a plate, often in the sautéed veal liver. 7313 Beverly Blvd. (323-297-0070 or www.angelinisteria.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun. Beer and wine. Italian $$$

A.O.C. Suzanne Goin and Caroline Styne's wine bar and small-plates venture has a festive vibe and glorious food: cheese plates, seasonal salads, fish (seared albacore with tapenade), and meat (lamb skewers with feta *salsa verde*). Scads of good wines by the glass. 8022 W. 3rd St. (323-653-6359). D nightly. Beer and wine. Small Plates $$

ASIA DE CUBA The restaurant in the beyond-hip Mondrian is filled with hot young celebs working on tuna *pica*, Cuban spiced chicken, and yucca-crusted mahimahi. Don't go home without the Latin Lover chocolate mousse cake with white coffee anglaise. Mondrian Hotel, 8440 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-848-6000). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Asian/Cuban $$$

BLOWFISH SUSHI Julian Lennon is one of the owners of this sushi-*anime*-nightclub combo imported from San Francisco. Flat screens galore flicker with cartoons, and on weekends the back room often booms with a techno-pop DJ. The lunch crowd comes from nearby offices, but at dinner it's the young and screamingly hip sipping on sake cocktails. The food stands up to the hype, thanks to dynamite sushi chefs and their impressive presentations. 9229 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-887-3848 or www.blowfishsushi.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Sushi $$$

CAFÉ CAPO Dark brown curtains soften the windows, and good food comes out on the plates. Colorful tomatoes and beets circle fresh *burrata* in a seasonal salad. The Caesar dressing has truffle oil. Beef tartare is astutely dressed, spot prawns are sweet and tender, and a halibut special makes the tofu of the fish kingdom tasty. 7450 Beverly Blvd. (323-857-6725). D nightly. Full bar. Modern Italian $$$

CAYENNE CAFÉ A neighborhood café has sprouted in the Piper Club space. It's cozy, with burgundy-and-gold banquettes, friendly servers, and good Moroccan mint tea. There are omelettes for breakfast (beginning at 7:30), pizzas, heated sandwiches, wraps, salads, and the like. The Middle Eastern beat is seen in the stuffed grape leaves, *ful* (fava beans with tomato, garlic, and olive oil), hummus, and spinach pie, and the organic coffees and teas go well with the baklava. 7169 Beverly Blvd. (323-857-1252). B-L-D daily. No alcohol. Mediterranean $

CENTRAL You're in the know if you can find this joint—behind a gym, up a hidden elevator—designed by Christopher Ciccone. Folks are parked in striped banquettes and mill around a red lacquer bar. The dining room is airy, with giant windows looking onto the city, and the food's fancy: *agnolotti* with chestnut puree and truffles, 12-layer baby beet salad with Humboldt Fog, and a Kobe bone-in rib eye with mascarpone-ricotta gnocchi. 8590 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-659-0092). D Tue.–Sat. Full bar. Contemporary American $$$

DAN TANA'S This old-fashioned hangout is a favorite among those who live for great steaks and chops, served by waiters who have been around, well, forever. The room is dark, the drinks strong. Celebs who hate to be bothered love the place. The spaghetti sauce is right out of Little Italy. 9071 Santa Monica Blvd. (310-275-9444). D nightly. Full bar. Northern Italian $$$

DIAGHILEV Walk past a harpist to your table, where a waiter sets down chilled shot glasses and decanters of vodka—tea, pepper, lemon, and orange? Time's forgotten here, and maitre d' Dimitri Dimitrov oversees all with unerring overseas charm. There's caviar, there's borscht, there are elegant fish and meat dishes, and there is service rarely found in this part of the world. Wyndham Bel Age Hotel, 1020 N. San Vicente Blvd. (310-854-1111). D Tue.–Sat. Full bar. French-Russian $$$$

EM BISTRO Have the homemade potato chips with crème fraîche at the bar, and start with an apple-pear-endive salad with Maytag blue at the table. Entrées range from wild Irish salmon to short ribs with polenta to game hen with couscous. Boston cream cake for dessert. 8256 Beverly Blvd. (323-658-6004). D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. American Bistro $$$

GRACE Designer Michael Berman redid the old Muse spot with polished-cement floors, cool chandeliers, and an orange-accented color scheme. As we'd expect from chef Neal Fraser, the food's tasty and innovative: sea urchin and pumpkin risotto, Scottish salmon with *brandade*-stuffed peppers, and olive oil–poached halibut. 7360 Beverly Blvd. (323-934-4400 or www.gracerestaurant.net). D Tue.–Sun. Full bar. New American $$$

IL SOLE This is an appealing alternative to the Euro-hip restaurants up the street. The room is small and the food decidedly Italian—no apology for butter, olive oil, salt, or garlic. But it's easy to dine lightly on the likes of a good artichoke salad or broiled fish filleted tableside. Ravioli is superb, stuffed with spinach and ricotta and served in a sage-butter sauce. On the heartier side, a New York strip is nicely charred. For dessert, the tiramisu is an ideal assembly of textures and tastes. 8741 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-657-1182). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Beer and wine. Italian $$$

JAR Chef Suzanne Tracht is at the helm of this chophouse, where her short ribs and braised pork belly are among the favored dishes. Steaks, chops, fish, and classics like an iceberg wedge and a lobster cocktail anchor the menu, which morphs for a heavenly Sunday brunch. 8225 Beverly Blvd. (323-655-6566 or www.thejar.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sun. Full bar. Steak House $$$

JOAN'S ON THIRD Imagine Dean & Deluca squeezed into a narrow run, with a few tables and a mother-daughter-son-in-law team who welcome half the crowd by name. Take out beautiful cheeses, salads concocted per your whims, sandwiches (turkey meat loaf, rosemary roast beef, prosciutto and *burrata*), soups, and all manner of gourmet food, or eat on the spot. The cupcakes are famous—so are a lot of the customers. 8350 W. 3rd St. (323-655-2285 or www.joansonthird.com). L-D daily. No alcohol. Gourmet Deli $$

NEW KINARA The café at Christine Splichal and Olga Loya Gutierrez's tony spa is a destination in its own right, with a relaxing patio as well as indoor space. There are healthy choices—*goji* berry (makes you young!) salad, fruit juices like pomegranate and Fuji apple made à la minute, and Zone and antiaging options. But there's also a wine list, baked French fries that don't taste like knockoffs, ricotta and prosciutto sandwiches, roast chicken, and chocolate croissant bread pudding that embraces caloric sinning. From 4 p.m. to closing, champagne and afternoon tea reign. 656 N. Robertson Blvd. (310-657-9188 or www.kinaraspa.com). B-L Tue.–Sun.; D Tue.–Sat. Wine. American $$

KOI The theme is Asian, the scene is hot, and the menu includes sushi, sashimi, and Japanese-influenced entrées. Dishes like seared scallop with yuzu and black cod with miso are tasty, but expect them to be tossed your way by a waiter rushing off to his next gig. Festive party drinks abound. 730 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-


JOHN HARDY
JEWELRY

659-9449 or www.koirestaurant.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Japanese $$$

L'ORANGERIE Owners Gerard and Virginie Feryn are the guardians of this landmark epitomizing extravagant old-world fine dining. Whether it's the signature cracked egg set in a silver cradle and topped with Petrossian caviar, Maine scallops served with their roe, or beef tenderloin with potato soufflé, all that's served here is seriously conceived and supremely executed. The wine list is extraordinary, too. 903 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-652-9770 or www.orangerie.com). D Tue.–Sun. Full bar. French $$$$

MATSUHISA It looks like an ordinary neighborhood sushi bar, but wait till you get to Nobu Matsuhisa's 25-page menu of cooked seafood dishes, including miso-flavored black cod, shrimp in a pepper sauce, and tempura sea urchin in a *shiso* leaf. 129 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-659-9639 or www.nobumatsuhisa.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Beer, wine, and sake. Japanese $$$

MIMOSA This modest storefront bistro resembles an ordinary restaurant in every way but one: The food is really good. A Rolls-Royce crowd dines on nowfamous mac and cheese with prosciutto as well as cassoulet, filet mignon, and roast chicken. The house motto: "No truffles, no caviar, no bizarre concoctions!" 8009 Beverly Blvd. (323-655-8895 or www.mimosarestaurant.com). D Tue.–Sat. Beer and wine. Country French Bistro $$$

ORSO This place is popular with celebrities who linger on the patio over fine thin-crust pizza and pasta, chicken, and fish. It's noisy, affable, and reasonably priced. 8706 W. 3rd St. (310-274-7144 or www.orsorestaurant.com). L-D daily. Full bar and Italian wine list. Italian $$

PEARL The decor is Hollywood sleek, with indoor and outdoor seating, a top-drawer staff, and the best food this location has seen: pan-seared oysters with spinach, prosciutto, and shrimp; deconstructed paella with seafood rimming the plate; a dry-aged New York strip. Tuesday night means "Karaoke from Hell" in the adjacent lounge—you with a pro backup band. Yes-ha. 665 N. Robertson Blvd. (310-358-9191). D nightly. Full bar. Contemporary American-Asian $$$

THE RESTAURANT The music's loud and the waitresses (squeezed into tight diner-style uniforms) young in this pseudo-diner attached to the hip hotel. The menu offers the likes of scampi, roast pork with caramelized apples, and the ultimate french fries. Desserts range from banana splits to *mochi* balls. Standard Hotel, 8300 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-822-3131). 24 hours daily. Full bar. International $$

THE ROOM A baroque room in the rock and roll hotel of record serves lobster risotto, rack of lamb, and meat loaf with masheds to hipsters en route to the Whiskey Bar. Sunset Marquis Hotel & Villas, 1200 Alta Loma Rd. (310-657-1333). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Continental Eclectic $$$

SONA Chefs David and Michelle Myers have a gem. The interior is sophisticated, the staff is sharp, and the seductive little bar serves lacy lotus root chips. The food is sublime: sweetbreads on macaroni, *unagi* for two, exquisite confit of wild Scottish salmon. Stunning desserts include Austrian pulled strudel with black beer ice cream. 401 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-659-7708). D Tue.–Sat. Full bar. Modern French $$$

SURYA Sapna, the manager, greets her diners like treasured guests, and by the inevitable second visit, you're family. Stuffed naan is a meal in itself, and the curries—vegetarian or with tender chicken or lamb—are exquisitely seasoned. Tandoori dishes are expertly cooked, and a prawn-pepper *masala* is comfort food, Eastern style. 8048 W. 3rd St. (323-653-5151). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Beer and wine. Indian $$

SUSHI ROKU There is reliably good sushi, sashimi, and hand rolls here, but cooked food also abounds: smoked salmon-skin salad, sizzling *tobanyaki* (sauteed mushrooms), filet mignon teriyaki. Specials might include caviar-topped monkfish pâté wrapped with salmon. 8445 W. 3rd St. (323-655-6767 or www.sushiroku.com). L Mon.–Sat.; D nightly. Also at 33 Miller Alley, Pasadena (626-683-3000); 1401 Ocean Ave., Santa Monica (310-458-4771). Full bar. Japanese $$$

YI CUISINE A lively patio separates the bar and its giant fireplace from the main, Asian-nuanced dining room. The menu's categorized by cooking technique: steamed, roasted, crispy, "eat it raw." Choose wisely: Sticky baby back ribs are uncrucously sweet, and the eight-hour roasted Maui onion is unimpressive. But salt-roasted *jidori* chicken is tender and tasty, salads are fresh and inventive, and Chef Rod Aglibot, a teddy bear of a guy, is hugging guests as they come and go. 7910 W. 3rd St. (323-658-8028 or www.yicuisine.com). L Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun. D nightly. Full bar. Asian $$$

BEVERLY HILLS

THE BELVEDERE This is an elegant room for power dining. At breakfast, it's anything from pancakes with chocolate butter to egg white omelettes. Later in the day, executive chef Bill Bracken's signature potato-crusted Chilean sea bass with an orange reduction sauce and fresh dill gives an idea of what's on tap. Peninsula Hotel, 9882 S. Santa Monica Blvd. (310-788-2306). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun. Full bar. California $$$

BLUE ON BLUE Here's indoor-outdoor dining at its easiest, with a hipster clientele likely to be sipping something blue and dining on creative salads, trios of soups, steak with truffled fries, and cinnamon-braised short ribs. Dine poolside in a cabana, and stare at the stars



NEW

Boule

Michelle Myers's patisserie (across from her restaurant, Sona) would do the Rue St. Honoré proud. Glass cases are filled with exquisite reasons to forget the figure: flaky croissants; macaroon sandwich cookies lined with jam in flavors like green tea, rose-raspberry, and passion fruit; pink peppercorn meringues; *cannelles* with sweet, crunchy exteriors protecting cake with crumb so fine it's like custard; and delicate chocolates. Designerly teapots and museum-quality lemon peelers to boot. *420 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-289-9977). Wed.–Sun. No alcohol. Patisserie $*

for dessert. Avalon Hotel, 9400 W. Olympic Blvd. (310-407-7791). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Cal-French $$$

DA PASQUALE This authentic trattoria serves first-rate pasta, pizza, and fish. The sautéed seafood appetizer comes in a luscious broth perfect for scooping with the pizza bread. Desserts include a *tartuffo* of chocolate gelato encased in a dark chocolate crust—like an ice cream pop, only better. 9749 S. Santa Monica Blvd. (310-859-3884). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Beer and wine. Southern Italian $$$

GARDENS Squeeze through the bar scene to reach this sanctuary, and you may find celebs enjoying the delights of chef Conny Andersson's homemade sausage of crab, salmon, prawns with cognac-cured gravlax in a honey-dill sauce, Maine lobster with black truffle porridge, and the best steaks ever. Four Seasons Hotel, 300 S. Doheny Dr. (310-273-2222 or www.fourseasons.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun. Full bar. Cal-Mediterranean $$$$

IL PASTAIO Giacomino Drago's restaurant is always good for antipasti, carpaccio, pasta, and risotto and reminds you of the homey neighborhood cafés found all over Italy. 400 N. Canon Dr. (310-205-5444 or www.celestinodrago.com). L Mon.–Sat.; D nightly. Full bar. Regional Italian $$

JAAN The room is blond and modern, the diners are dressed in black, the food is the edible equivalent of a bespoke suit, and the service is impeccable. A thick arctic char is moist beneath a crisped skin, and Kobe beef tenderloin is one decadent dish. Desserts come with the likes of Java pepper ice cream, sour cream–pineapple sorbet, and lychee granita. Raffles L'Ermitage, 9291 Burton Way (310-385-5344). B-L-D daily. Full bar. California $$$

LA DOLCE VITA The lights are low, the walls brick and dotted with art, and the waiters call you "Milady." This is old-school Italian without being musty. The menu features six veal dishes alone—the scallopini marsala is a standout. Other highlights include sand dabs, ossso buco (on Thursday), and for dessert, *tartuffo* and spumoni cake. Sinatra's playing in the background, natch. 9785 S. Santa Monica Blvd. (310-278-1845 or www.ladolcevitabeverlyhills.com). D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Italian $$$

LA SCALA The famous and infamous come to this Beverly Hills institution to dine on breaded and deep-fried mozzarella, grilled chicken sausage with peppers, Tuscan *cannellini*, and a delish *linguine fruitti di mare* consisting of every sea creature unlucky enough to get caught in the net. 434 N. Canon Dr. (310-275-0579). L-D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Italian $$$

LOT 1224 This is a casual spot on the flip side of a bar whose newest creations are no-carb cocktails for Zoners. The food is good, varied, and modestly priced, from a sashimi salad to charred-pumpkin ravioli, wok-fired shrimp to a grilled black Angus strip. Gracious staff to boot. Loews Beverly Hills Hotel, 1224 S. Beverwil Dr. (310-277-2800). B-L-D daily. Full bar. California $$$

MAKO The open kitchen is almost as large as the blond wood dining room at this outstanding restaurant. Mako Tanaka and crew balletically whip up crispy oyster and pickled beet salads, wok-sautéed sea bass with rapini and mushrooms, and a menu of delectable small-plate dishes. Everything's glorious. 225 S. Beverly Dr. (310-288-8833). L Wed.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Asian Fusion $$$

MASTRO'S STEAKHOUSE This place is serious about its meat: hand-cut USDA prime served with the bone in on 400-degree plates. Supreme. It's also serious about its martinis, which come in full-size shakers left at your table. Lots of stately fishes to choose from as well. Upstairs is a buzzy bar scene with live music for an over-40 crowd. 246 N. Canon Dr. (310-888-6782 or www.mastrossteakhouse.com). D nightly. Full bar. Steak House $$$$

MR CHOW Prices are high—particularly if you let the waiter order for you—but the food's good and celeb spotting likely. Famed dishes include green prawns (marinated in spinach juice), drunken fish (poached in rice wine), handmade noodles, and gambler's duck (marinated, steamed, fried, shredded). 344 N. Camden Dr. (310-278-9911 or www.mrchow.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Chinese $$$

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PICCOLO PARADISO This is indeed a "little paradise," thanks to chef Giacomino Drago, who is also at Il Pastaio. Images from *Cinema Paradiso* are projected on the walls, salads and antipasti are delightfully simple, and entrées of note include rigatoni with wild boar ragout and veal shank with polenta. 150 S. Beverly Dr. (310-271-0030 or www.giacominodrago.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Beer and wine. Italian $$

POLO LOUNGE This was a power-breakfast spot before there was such a thing. Tried-and-true favorites, including the McCarthy salad, are as good as ever. So are updates like the shrimp and scallops stir-fried with sweet chile sauce and shredded green papaya. Beverly Hills Hotel, 9641 Sunset Blvd. (310-276-2251). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun. Full bar. International $$$

SPAGO BEVERLY HILLS You've read the books, seen the TV show—now sit at Wolfgang Puck's illustrious table. What could be ordinary—crawfish salad, filet mignon tartare, yellowtail, veal chop, lobster with asparagus puree—becomes, in the hands of exec chef Lee Hefter, extraordinary. Sherry Yard's desserts are equally rapturous. 176 N. Canon Dr. (310-385-0880 or www.wolfgangpuck.com). L. Mon.–Sat.; D nightly. Full bar. California $$$

WESTWOOD & WEST L.A.

BREEZE Stop on your way to or from the Entertainment Center. It's spacious and quiet, and the food is stellar: clams and oysters on the half shell, peeky toe crab cakes, thick pork chops with white cheddar macaroni. Desserts live up to all that goes before. Century Plaza Hotel, 2025 Avenue of the Stars, Century City (310-551-3334 or www.breezela.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. California Eclectic $$$

THE GARDENS ON GLENDON The neighborhood restaurant was never this uptown. From tableside guacamole to a dry-aged New York steak, the menu is varied and has a fresh Provençal feel. Try the crab spring rolls wrapped in lettuce in a tamarind sauce and finish with a latte in a giant cup. 1139 Glendon Ave., Westwood (310-824-1818 or www.gardensonglendon.com). L-D daily. Full bar. Continental $$$

HAMASAKU At this minimall spot, it's easy to order a medley of starters and call it a meal. The mixed tempura is tasty, and the salmon sashimi roll is wrapped in cucumber with caviar. Entrées include rack of lamb, chicken teriyaki, and assorted sushi and sashimi dinners. 11043 Santa Monica Blvd., West L.A. (310-479-7636). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Beer and wine. Japanese $$$

LA CACHETTE Master French chef Jean François Meteigner serves his exquisite food in a beautiful dining room. From Petrossian caviar to foie gras terrine, Marseilles bouillabaisse to sweetbreads with black chanterelle–morel sauce, venison medallions to braised lamb shank, it's all extraordinary. 10506 S. Santa Monica Blvd., Century City (310-470-4992 or www.lacachetterestaurant.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. French $$$

NEW **NINE THIRTY** The W Hotel's restaurant is small and loud. The menu's innovative, but its execution discombobulated. A shaved apple salad with Marcona almonds has an excess of overly acidic dressing that pools at the bottom of the dish; there are few wines by the glass, and they're slow to arrive. Go for the bone-in meats and for dessert, the *affogato*—espresso poured over ice cream with butterscotch sauce. It's inspired but hard to tackle in a bowl shaped like Disney Hall. W Hotel, 930 Hilgard Ave., Westwood (310-208-8765). B-L-D daily. Full bar. American $$$

NOOK It's hard to find—head for the walkway between the pizza place and the dry cleaner. Folks from the café at Bergamot Station have made a warm, unfussy room with a muted palette, and it percolates with a mixed-age crowd, some of whom mingle at a central communal table. Half a roast chicken is as good as you'll find anywhere, with a crisp skin and extraordinarily moist meat; couscous and vegetable stew combines al dente carrots, chickpeas, and tomatoes with mild spices; red snapper is encircled with a lovely orange-tinged sauce. Great burgers, great prices, happy campers. 11628 Santa Monica Blvd., West L.A. (310-207-5160 or www.nookbistro.com). L-D daily. Beer and wine. American $$

ORRIS Hideo Yamashiro, chef-owner of Shiro, has a new inside-outside spot with small tables, small plates, and a sushi bar where a chef with a backward baseball cap might be sipping beer between slices. The menu embraces many nations: It's got beets with thin sheets of sheep's milk cheese, beef croquettes, sashimi, cheese plates, Mexican shrimp with curry, New Zealand lamb chops. Ciao Gelato ice cream and sorbet for dessert. 2006 Sawtelle Blvd., West L.A. (310-268-2212 or www.orrisrestaurant.com). D Mon.–Sat. Beer, wine, and sake. French Fusion $$

OSTERIA LATINI Now here's a find. The discreet entryway's easy to miss, but the inside is roomier than might be imagined, with Tuscan sun–colored walls, blond wood tables, and waiters with Italian accents. The menu's lengthy, with authentic but creative salads (arugula, pear, sun-dried cherries, and goat cheese), antipasti (carpaccio, calamari, *bresaola*), risottos (porcini, lobster), pastas (duck ravioli with orange cream sauce), and all sorts of beautifully prepared fish, chicken, and meat. The waitstaff is friendly and personable but not invasive. Nice wine list, too. 11712 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood (310-826-9222 or www.osterialatini.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Beer and wine. Italian $$$

THE RESTAURANT Considered by many the most romantic spot in Los Angeles, this hotel dining room and patio is approached by crossing over a swan-filled stream and traversing a flowered path to an elegant space where the fireplace is always lit, even in the heat of summer. The food is exquisite. Hotel Bel-Air, 701 Stone Canyon Rd., Bel-Air (310-472-5324 or www.hotelbelair.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun.; tea Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Cal-French $$$$

SOR TINO You get a taste of Italy at Agostino Sciandri's new place, particularly on the patio, where businessmen drink tiny espressos at midday. The waiters are appropriately accented, and so is the food: *burrata* with tomatoes and basil, thin-crust pizzas that don't overdo the cheese, homemade pastas with sauces ranging from wild boar to fresh vegetables, risottos, and simply prepared fish and meat—including rabbit. Nobody's showing off in the kitchen; they're just making very good food. 908 S. Barrington Ave., Brentwood (310-442-8466). L-D daily. Beer and wine. Florentine $$$

TANINO The food at Tanino Drago's upstairs/downstairs spot is superb: calamari stew, carpaccio, artichoke salad, pumpkin and sage lasagna, risotto with shrimp and truffles, grilled ahi, and T-bone with baby bok choy. Velvety *panna cotta* with a berry compote is the ultimate kicker. 1043 Westwood Blvd., Westwood (310-208-0444 or www.tanino.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Italian $$$

VIBRATO This jazz club has one helluva pedigree. Herb Alpert hooked up with the Parkway Grill's Smith brothers and former Nick & Stef's Steakhouse chef Sharon Funt and made music the hook. A quartet starts playing at 6:30, and the food hits all the right notes: four juicy cuts of steak; clever sides like eggplant baklava, braised spinach, couscous, and chickpea ragout; a divine homemade *pappardelle* with braised osso buco. The apple-loganberry pie with buttermilk ice cream will make you save room for dessert. 2930 N. Beverly Glen Cir., Bel-Air (310-474-9400). D nightly. Full bar. American $$$

Patty Takes



TASTE OFF *There's a way to outwit those low-carb diets: Order a smaller burger! There's no need to hold the bun at the following establishments. – Kari Mazena*

THE PLACE: BOE, Crescent Hotel. **THE CHEFS:** Denise Shnickler and Erik Ritter. **THE BEEF:** Mini Curry Burgers. Four patties with tamarind chutney on toasted bread topped with a mint leaf. **THE PRICE:** $15. *403 N. Crescent Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-247-0505 or www.crescentbh.com.*

THE PLACE: Hamburger Hamlet. **THE BEEF:** Baby Burger Sampler. Four Muenster-topped patties complemented by fried onions, pickles, avocado, or sautéed mushrooms. **THE PRICE:** $8.95. *9201 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood, 310-278-4924 or www.hamburgerhamlet.com for other locations.*

THE PLACE: Windows Lounge, Four Seasons Hotel. **THE CHEF:** Conny Andersson. **THE BEEF:** Chopped Kobe Sirloin Sliders. Three baby burgers topped with caramelized onions and cheddar and served on house-made sesame-seed buns. Accompanied by shoestring potatoes drizzled with truffle oil. **THE PRICE:** $19. *300 S. Doheny Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-273-2222.*

THE PLACE: The Cheesecake Factory. **THE BEEF:** Roadside Sliders. Four little ones with grilled onions, pickles, and ketchup. **THE PRICE:** $6.95. *15301 Ventura Blvd., Shermon Oaks, 818-906-0700 or www.thecheesecakefactory.com for other locations.*

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GRAND TOUR

Deep Pockets

Searching for the city's best **northern Chinese dumplings**? Try these

Whether slurped at an outdoor street market or savored in a swanky suburban dining room, Chinese dumplings are high-ranking comfort foods. From their peasant beginnings in China's wheat-growing north, dumplings made their way into the wealthy kitchens of Shanghai, where creative cooks would stuff them with aspic that turned to soup upon heating or made crispy-bottomed potstickers. In Canton, rice flour, taro, or wheat starch was used for the casings. In L.A., the San Gabriel Valley is home to some of the finest northern-style dumplings.



SPILL IT: Steamed veggie pockets at Dumpling 10053

Many regard **Din Tai Fung Dumpling House** as the ne plus ultra of Shanghai-style dumplings. Its soup-filled samples are one-bite flavor explosions that require so much time and skill to prepare, they're only available on weekends. While waiting for a table, you can see the kitchen team rolling, cutting, and shaping other dumplings—juicy crab and pork, vegetarian, sweet whitefish—in skins as fine as tissue. *1108 S. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, 626-574-7068.*

At newcomer **Dumpling 10053**, seafood predominates. Exquisite salmon crescents show pink through sheer casings, mustard greens are lightened with glass noodles and minced mushrooms, and golden-bottomed potstickers have just the right meat-to-vegetable ratio. *10053 Valley Blvd., Ste. 2, El Monte, 626-350-0188.*

Each dumpling skin at **Luscious Dumplings** sports a different decorative pleating to indicate what's inside. Fried empanada-shaped versions balance chives, pork, egg, and crunchy dried shrimp, and a pork dumpling brings fish and napa cabbage together for an ethereal filling. *704 W. Las Tunas Dr., San Gabriel, 626-282-8695.*

At **Dumpling Master**, sturdier dumplings using thicker pasta are stuffed to bursting and the seasoning is quintessentially northern Chinese. Chicken and beef are perfumed with Chinese celery; freshwater fish has a touch of egg, chives, and bean thread noodles. All dumplings, including a vegetarian selection, may be purchased frozen to cook at home. *423 N. Atlantic Blvd., Ste. 106, Monterey Park, 626-458-8689.*

Photos of party platters grace the walls at **MaMa's Kitchen Dumpling and Noodle World**, where stout dough pockets look as though they've been made by the Chinese grandmother pictured in the café's logo. Fillings run from rich Mongolian lamb to leek with pork to delicate green bean with egg. Everything goes with MaMa's amazing tea-smoked chicken. Frozen versions are available for takeout. *1718 New Ave., San Gabriel, 626-289-8984.* —*LINDA BURUM*

VINCENTI Few restaurateurs have the devotion and spirit of Maureen Vincenti, whose late husband, Mauro, was the proprietor of downtown's landmark Rex. Working in a giant glass-walled kitchen, chef Nicola Mastronardi turns out delicate pizzas (on Monday), authentic pastas, rotisserie-cooked fish and meats, and beautiful vegetable creations with the soul of the old country served sunny-side up. **11930 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood (310-207-0127). L Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Italian $$$**

MARINA DEL REY

CAFFÈ PINGUINI They've got frescoes, authentic cuisine, and waiters from the old country. The spinach appetizer with pepperoncini is a standout, and everything else, from the rigatoni Gorgonzola to the veal *piccata*, is *molto bene*. **6935 Pacific Ave., Playa del Rey (310-306-0117 or www.caffepinguini.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun. Beer and wine. Italian $$**

CHLOE This small restaurant and its top-notch wine list are raising the bar in Playa. Chilled leeks with egg mimosa (grated hard-boiled *oeufs*) or seared scallops with a frisée salad set the tone for what's to come: sautéed monkfish with shrimp, baby clams, and fingerlings, perhaps, or a perfectly cooked Angus sirloin with artichokes and potato hash. **333 Culver Blvd., Playa del Rey (310-305-4505 or www.chloe-restaurant.com). D Mon.–Sat. Beer and wine. Progressive American $$$**

JER-ME This beautiful room can be noisy, particularly when events are booked on the patio, but chef Troy Thompson's food more than compensates: delicately rich Kobe carpaccio, grilled sturgeon with rhubarb, and a New York strip with smoked Gouda croquettes. A daily *bento* box, dim sum, and Peking duck are inspired. **Ritz-Carlton in the Marina, 4375 Admiralty Way, Marina del Rey (310-574-4333 or www.troythompson.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun. Full bar. California $$$**

CULVER CITY & VENICE

AMUSE CAFÉ Chefs Brooke Williamson and Nick Roberts are serving a small menu composed mostly of small plates: steamed mussels, seasonal salads, fish and vegetables, a tasty rib eye burger. For brunch, eggs and pancakes. Desserts include a brownie sundae with mint ice cream and M&M's. **796 Main St., Venice (310-450-1956 or www.amusecafe.com). D Wed.–Sun.; brunch Fri.–Sun. Beer and wine. American Bistro $$**

AXE The atmosphere is minimalist, but the food is creative and hearty—fresh fish and meats, seasonal vegetables. After an appetizer of grilled flatbread with hummus, eggplant, and caramelized onion spreads, tuck into miso-marinated halibut or duck leg confit with plum-orange sauce. Dessert? Chocolate brownie pudding or cobbler. **1009 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-664-9787 or www.axerestaurant.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun. Beer and wine. Eclectic $$$**

BEACON Green tea *soba* noodles are tossed with shredded pea pods and carrots and studded with broiled shrimp. The *bento* box, perfect for lunch, includes sashimi, superb grilled chicken, and chilled veggies. Desserts rock, too: lychee sorbet with raspberries, or a sundae with little Rice Krispies squares and ribbons of chocolate and caramel. **3280 Helms Ave., Culver City (310-838-7500). L daily; D Tue.–Sun. Beer and wine. Asian Bistro $$**

CHAYA VENICE Talk about a jumpin' joint. Happy hour's a mob of the sleek and chic at this Asia moderne happening, and the food is always top-notch. Everything—from carpaccio, sashimi, sushi, and seaweed salad to the pastas and the vegetarian plate—is superbly prepared. **110 Navy St., Venice (310-396-1179 or www.thechaya.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. French/Asian $$$**

HAL'S BAR & GRILL A main hang for Venice's artsy crowd, this room is home to one of the city's supreme vegetarian plates as well as fine grilled dishes served in a space that would work just as well in SoHo. But the attitude is turned way down. 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-396-3105 or www.halsbarandgrill.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. California $$

JOE'S RESTAURANT Joe Miller's subtly stylish restaurant is a Venice landmark that serves upscale creative food at moderate prices. Entrées include beef risotto with grilled asparagus and crispy chicken with a spring vegetable ragout. Lunch and brunch are top-notch bargains. 1023 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-399-5811 or www.joesrestaurant.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. Cal-French $$

PICCOLO CIPRIANI Stefano de Lorenzo and partner-chef Antonio Mure, whose combined résumé includes Valentino, Locanda Veneta, and Il Moro, have opened a friendly little beachside restaurant in the old 5 Dudley spot. You'll be waved in enthusiastically by everyone in the kitchen before taking a seat amid Venetian *carnevale* masks and photos of the canals. The pastas—potato-and-fig *tortelli*, veal-and-spinach ravioli—are simple and flavorful, and a Caesar salad gets a fresh twist. 5 Dudley Ave., Venice (310-314-3222 or www.piccolocipriani.com). L Fri.–Sun.; D nightly. Beer and wine. Italian $$$

SHIMA Chef Yoshi Shigenobu has a spare, chic organic restaurant (meaning brown sushi rice). There are a few tables downstairs, where diners casually chat with the chef as he works, and a few more above. The menu is simple and supreme: *toro* tartare with caviar, baby halibut sashimi, grilled fish on skewers, freshly dressed salads, and a seafood pizza. Tapioca and sweet bean in coconut milk for dessert. 1432 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-314-0882). D Tue.–Sun. Organic beer, wine, and sake. Japanese $$

NEW VENICE CANTINA The old St. Mark's Place, below a youth hostel on a dicey block by the beach, is now a hipster cantina serving the likes of jicama-watercress salad with oranges, light as air *carne asada sopes*, and skirt steak tacos—until midnight (and sometimes beyond). The decor is all primary colors, sculptures resembling giant freeway signs, and glass Virgin Mary candles flickering behind a blue wooden bar. Plasma TVs run surfer flicks. 23 Windward Ave., Venice (310-399-8420). D nightly. Full bar. Mexican $$

WABI SABI This is a real neighborhood restaurant with an extensive sushi menu complemented by salads (calamari and snow peas), appetizers (popcorn-crusted chicken wings), and entrées (bouillabaisse ladled over a chewy rice cake, tender beef fillet with pumpkin puree). The desserts are Asian spiced. 1635 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-396-8857). D nightly. Full bar. Japanese $$

SANTA MONICA

CAPO Bruce Marder's tiny, romantic room sits smack on the ocean (no views, though) next to the Santa Monica Pier. The menu is short and simple—filet mignon, rack of lamb, lobster risotto, et al.—and the ingredients are exquisite. Finish with candied bread pudding. 1810 Ocean Ave. (310-394-5550 or www.foodlovesmt.com). D Tue.–Sat. Full bar. Italian $$$$

CÉZANNE The formal dining room with tuxedoed waiters breaks from hotel-restaurant tradition by offering sterling food and a choice of prix fixe menus. Le Merigot Hotel, 1740 Ocean Ave. (310-395-9700 or www.lemerigot-hotel.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Classic French $$$$

CHEZ JAY Across the street from the Santa Monica Pier, Chez Jay may be the perfect L.A. restaurant: sawdust on the floor, Dino on the jukebox, and beach-combers and movie directors elbow-to-elbow at the bar. The food—steamed clams, swordfish, steak—is really just another good excuse for one more round. 1657 Ocean Ave. (310-395-1741). L-D daily; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. American $$

CHINOIS ON MAIN Salads and the sashimi appetizer are exquisite and light at Wolfgang Puck's French fusion restaurant, leaving room for tasty entrées along the lines of Cantonese duck and barbecued salmon with black and gold pasta. The crème brûlée trio has a flavor for everyone. 2709 Main St. (310-392-9025 or www.wolfgangpuck.com). L Wed.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. French/Asian $$$

DRAGO Celestino Drago pursues his love of Sicilian cooking with dazzling success in this striking restaurant, where the setting contrasts with the casual cuisine—dishes like tortellini with pumpkin in a butter-sage sauce and eggplant cooked a dozen ways. 2628 Wilshire Blvd. (310-828-1585 or www.celestinodrago.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Italian $$

THE GRILLE Perfectly prepared steaks, veal chops, and fish pair with the likes of Gorgonzola mashed potatoes and corn risotto. Warm apple tart à la mode for dessert. Fairmont Miramar, 101 Wilshire Blvd. (310-319-3111). B-L-D daily. Full bar. California/Mediterranean $$$

THE HUMP The sushi's as good as it gets, and so is everything else here. A sashimi salad pairs spicy greens with a fresh selection of fish and octopus, the soft-shell crabs (seasonal) are exquisite, and conch is served raw or sautéed with asparagus and mushrooms. Santa Monica Airport, 3221 Donald Douglas Loop South (310-313-0977 or www.thehumpsashoon.biz). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Japanese $$

IVY AT THE SHORE The Ivy's ocean-adjacent outpost sports tropical-beach-shack decor and a patio. As on Robertson, the food is excellent and the celeb sightings frequent. Why mess with perfection? 1541 Ocean Ave. (310-393-3113). L-D daily. Also at 113 N. Robertson Blvd., Beverly Hills (310-274-8303). Full bar. American $$$

JIRAFFE Raphael Lunetta's food is elegant and accented with intense flavors: purple Peruvian potato gnocchi with rock shrimp, roast rabbit with polenta, a caramelized pork chop with cider sauce. Warm chocolate truffle cake for dessert. 502 Santa Monica Blvd. (310-917-6671 or www.jiraffe restaurant.com). D nightly. Full bar. French Rustic $$

JOSIE Chef Josie LeBalch indulges her flair for Italian, French, and game, which means creations like seared baby cuttlefish on warm sausage-studded lentils, rack of lamb with a marmalade onion–potato tart, fish *tagine* with preserved lemon, or Texas wild boar. Crumbie or lemon zabaglione for dessert. 2424 Pico Blvd. (310-581-9888 or www.josierestaurant.com). D nightly. Full bar. Progressive American $$$

LAVANDE If you're looking for a quiet place to hear yourself—and your dining companions—talk, the quest is ended. At night, the illuminated Ferris wheel on the pier offers a colorful backdrop; in daylight, you have a full view of the beach. The food is simple—roast meats and fish, pastas and salads—and the service discreet. Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, 1700 Ocean Ave. (310-576-3180 or www.loewshotels.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun. Full bar. Cal-Mediterranean $$$

MÉLISSE The tariff is steep at Josiah Citrin's foodie mecca, but the cuisine is exquisite: Mandarin tomato soup with goat cheese–sweet garlic flan, mille-feuille of ahi tartare with fennel sauce and tapenade, wild king salmon with lima bean puree, or the ineffably dreamy chef's menu. The cheese course is fit for a king. 1104 Wilshire Blvd. (310-395-0881 or www.melisse.com). D nightly. Full bar. French/American $$$$

MICHAEL'S The garden is still the most romantic in town, and the food is reliable. Choices may include sautéed spot prawns with carrot pesto and jalapeño oil, rosemary–chicken liver mousse, or as entrées, a seared, rare salmon or a classic dry-aged steak with *pommes frites*. It's all good. 1147 3rd St. (310-451-0843 or www.michaelssantamonica.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. California $$$

OCEANFRONT This sophisticated restaurant abuts one of the nicest cocktail lounges at the beach and boasts an ocean view. The food is serious and seasonal. Hotel Casa Del Mar, 1910 Ocean Way (310-581-7714 or www.casadelmar.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. Continental $$$$

ONE PICO With its ocean view, high ceilings, and fireplace, this light-filled restaurant gets almost nothing wrong: grilled shrimp with orange butter, house-cured salmon with corn cakes and crème fraîche, oysters with a dab of caviar and lemongrass cream, perfectly



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grilled lamb chops. **Shutters on the Beach, 1 Pico Blvd. (310-587-1717 or www.shutterson thebeach.com). L-D daily. Full bar. California $$$**

SAM'S Owner Samer Elias is showcasing the Mediterranean here: Sea urchin on arugula, bluefin tuna tartare, red pepper soup, and grilled escolar served with citrus fruits are all outstanding. The milk custard in a phyllo bird's nest with rose water syrup is an exotic kicker. **108 W. Channel Rd. (310-230-9100). D Tue.–Sun. Beer and wine. Cal-Mediterranean $$$**

310 LOUNGE AND RESTAURANT The old Flint's has been gussied up with big semicircular leather booths and swell lighting and turned into a jazz spot. Little plates—toasted Marcona almonds, chicken wings—flatter a martini menu, a fresh garden salad features top veggies from the farmers' market, the wild salmon's served with gnocchi, and the Kurobuta pork chop is among the most tender you'll find. Sorbets and gelati for dessert. **3321 Pico Blvd. (310-453-5001 or www.310lounge.com). D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Global $$$**

VALENTINO Piero Selvaggio's flagship changed the way we perceive Italian cooking, and his standards rival those of the finest restaurants worldwide. He seduces us with the best white truffles, the purest olive oils, the tenderest prosciutto, and a wine cellar that's won numerous awards and lured diners from around the world. **3115 Pico Blvd. (310-829-4313 or www.pieroselvaggio.com). L Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Italian $$$**

WHIST Chef Warren Schwartz, ex of Saddle Peak Lodge, is enjoying the freedom a non-game menu brings. He's brightened up the Viceroy's dining room with interesting fish dishes, which he pairs with seasonal vegetables. His experience with meats is obvious in the pork and beef entrées. Interesting wine list. **Viceroy, 1819 Ocean Ave. (310-451-8711 or www.viceroysantamonica.com). B-L-D daily. Full bar. American $$$**

MALIBU & PACIFIC PALISADES

ALLEGRIA This gracious space feels like a friend's dining room—dark wood country tables, brocade booths, exposed-brick walls, and a backlit garden terrace. Before you devour chef Antonio Mure's divine orange pie you'll want to start with the calamari *fritti* (done just so), a wood-fired pizza, or lobster-stuffed pasta in saffron sauce with asparagus tips. **22821 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu (310-456-3132 or www.allegriamalibu.com). L-D daily. Beer and wine. Italian $$**

GRANITA After tasting Jennifer Naylor's cooking—almond-blackberry pancakes with lemon curd, morel mushroom lasagna with purple asparagus, or ahi with a spicy miso glaze and sesame crisps—at Wolfgang Puck's Malibu outpost, even the saddest souls will want to skip their Prozac. The sorbets and granitas burst with flavor. **23725 W. Malibu Rd., Malibu (310-456-0488 or www.wolfgangpuck.com). D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun. Full bar. Cal-Mediterranean $$$**

NOBU At Nobu Matsuhisa's cozy spot, ceviche is a spicy mélange of shrimp and fish marinated in lemon juice and rice vinegar; the *tiradito* is flower shaped; and the sushi and sashimi are standard-bearers. For dessert, try broiled plums with a meringue puff and ginger ice cream. **Malibu Country Mart, 3835 Cross Creek Rd., Malibu (310-317-9140 or www.noburestaurants.com). D nightly. Full bar. Japanese $$$**

SADDLE PEAK LODGE Deer and moose heads give the three-story landmark a clubby feel, and the food is wild—literally: rack of venison, roast pheasant breast, a game tasting plate of buffalo, duck, and elk. Everything is elegant, meticulously seasoned, and expertly cooked. The banana-and-walnut bread pudding

DISH

Small Bites

Peet's Coffee has withdrawn its application to buy **Irv's Burgers**, the beloved West Hollywood stand at Sweetzer and Santa Monica, perhaps in response to the battle cries of the **Burger Brigade**—a group hell-bent on protecting the Route 66 landmark and its gracious owners, the **Hong** family. SAVE IRV'S T-shirts are now on sale to help fund the fight. See www.irvsburgers.com for info.

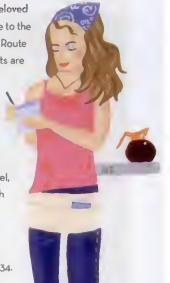
The Raymond restaurant in Pasadena has new owners and a redesign.

Brooke Williamson and **Nick Roberts** have their long-awaited liquor license at **Amuse Café** and an interesting selection of wines and beers.

Mark Peel has taken over Grilled Cheese Thursdays at **Campanile** and ex-wife **Nancy Silverton**, who has sold her share of the restaurant to Peel, is handling Mozzarella Mondays at **JAR** and *Tavolo Fredo* Tuesdays (with antipasti) at **La Terza** while she develops an Italian restaurant project with **Mario Batali**.

The **Huntington Ritz-Carlton** is offering monthly pastry classes for kids. They'll learn to make Saint Patrick's Day treats on March 12. Call 626-585-6434.

Rod Aglibot at **Yi Cuisine** is serving upscale island food at lunch, brunch, and happy hour these days. That means, depending on the meal, the likes of Filipino chow mein, banana fritters with mango sauce and ginger crème, and the Saigon, a Vietnamese street-style sandwich of lemongrass-scented pork and pickled vegetables in a flaky bun. —*M.D.*



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comes with—what else?—Wild Turkey caramel sauce. 419 Cold Canyon Rd., Calabasas (818-222-3888 or www.saddlepeaklodge.com). D Tue.–Sun.; bruneh Sun. Full bar. American $$$

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

NEW **BACCO TRATTORIA** It's a locals and a Warner Bros. crowd grabbing heros and prosciutto and Roma roast beef sandwiches by day. At night diners linger over the *piccoli assaggi* (small tastes), a four-plate masterpiece of N.Y. strip steak over arugula and tomato confit; Chilean sea bass with potato, olives, and pine nuts; veal rolls with fontina, mozzarella, and wild mushrooms; and pan-seared salmon with a lemon-chardonnay sauce. The deli is open Monday through Friday, 3821 Riverside Dr., Burbank (818-845-8036 or www.baccotrattoria.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Italian $$$

BISTRO GARDEN AT COLDWATER The prettiest room in the Valley is light and airy if a bit noisy. Menu highlights include poached salmon with champagne-caviar sauce and an elk chop with red cabbage and spaetzle. 12950 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-501-0202). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Continental $$$

LE PETIT BISTRO The atmosphere is convivial yet intimate, the food excellent, and the bistro fare includes black mussels marinara, frog legs, veal sausage, baby lamb chops, and profiteroles. 13360 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-501-7999 or www.lepetitbistro.net). D nightly. Also at 631 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-289-9797). Full bar. French $$

SEÑOR FRED Cave-dark lighting, shimmery wallpaper, tall banquettes, and a sidewalk patio hung with iron chandeliers mark the food here. It's *sabroso*: jicama, orange, papaya, and mango salad dusted with chiles; enchiladas blanketed with mole; and the best hot chocolate in the universe. 13730 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-789-3200 or www.senorfred.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Mexican $$

NEW **VINEYARD TERRACE RESTAURANT AND WINE BAR** There's no wine snobbery at this homespun bistro whose open kitchen is reminiscent of a church rec center. The grape comes by the glass and in the food: zinfandel-braised beef short ribs, champagne and blackberry–cabernet sauvignon sorbets. If you can still hold your fork, there's a zinfandel-poached pear stuffed with Point Reyes blue cheese. Have someone else drive. 11266 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-506-9463 or www.vineyardterraceerestaurant.com). D nightly. Beer and wine. California $$$

GLENDALE, PASADENA & SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

BAR CELONA The menu offers tapas and larger dishes. Try one of the sampler platters for orientation, and you'll realize any direction is the right one. Roasted garlic–vegetable soup, mixed meat grill, salmon with fried polenta, or any of the paellas will make you a more fulfilled person. We love the garlic-smoked, paprika-flecked fries that come with the lunchtime *bocadillos* (sandwiches). 46 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena (626-405-1000). L-D daily. Full bar. Spanish $$

BISTRO 45 Squirreled away on a side street, this art deco bistro is one of the Rose City's best-kept secrets—a romantic space with one of the finest wine lists in town and monthly dinners with wine makers. 45 S. Mentor Ave., Pasadena (626-795-2478 or www.bistro45.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun. Full bar. Cal-French $$$

CAMILO'S CALIFORNIA BISTRO Come for supreme *chilaquiles*—crispy-fried julienned tortillas topped with eggs and avocado—and some of the best tiramisu in town. In between are salads and griddle sandwiches at lunch, and sweetbreads, calamari, filet mignon, and pork chops with apples and onions at night. 2128 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock (323-478-2644). B-L Tue.–Sun.; D Tue.–Sat.; brunch Sun. Beer and wine. California $$

CINNABAR The exotic decor of the dining room helps you forget about the car lots outside. Then there's chef Damon Bruner's food: appetizers like yellowtail mille-feuille and spicy lemongrass bouillabaisse, along with such architectural entrées as Colorado lamb chops and air-dried duck. 933 S. Brand Blvd., Glendale (818-551-1155). D Tue.–Sun. Full bar. Fusion $$$

E'S WINE BAR AND RESTAURANT Stylish wood floors and a handsome bar area set the tone for this lovely space. Sake cocktails and wine flights are house signatures, and good salads and no-fuss fresh entrées—meat, fish, pasta—are presented in generous proportions. 115 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena (626-793-6544 or www.eswinebar.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun. Wine and sake. California/Italian $$

FIREFLY BISTRO The tented patio and pom-pom topiaries make this part Arabian Nights, part spa. Go for the pecan-coated catfish, sautéed duck breast, and mint-sprinkled lamb skewers. Molten chocolate cake with caramelized bananas is lick-the-plate good. 1009 El Centro Ave., South Pasadena (626-441-2443). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sun. Beer and wine. American Eclectic $$

NEW **NAYA** Chef Scooter Kanfer-Cartmill knows a pork chop's soul. For two years at the house she coaxed the essence of savor out of pork loin and chicken breast, and now she is doing the same and more in Old Town—breathing life into crispy sweetbreads and *côte de bouf*, reinvigorating a tiny, perfect steak tartare with the blinking eye of a quail egg. Shellfish is not the chef's strong suit. Naya has a simple interior and a versatile wine list apparently priced by Trader Joe's. 49 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena (626-793-4712 or www.nayadining.com). D Tue.–Sun. Full bar. Progressive American $$$

TRATTORIA TRE VENEZIE This quaint restaurant has books on its shelves and framed family photos on the walls. All pastas, including spinach and ricotta gnocchi and ravioli stuffed with red beets and ricotta, are made fresh daily, and the *crema del gondolier*, flavored with caramelized sugar and toasted ground almonds, is the perfect *dolci*. 119 W. Green St., Pasadena (626-795-4455). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun. Full bar. Northern Italian $$$

XIOMARA Serving *poblano* risotto with tomatillo, cilantro, and lime juice; *nuevo cubano* chicken *putacones*; spicy duck *ropa vieja*, and mini flans flavored with *guayaba*, *mamey*, and *guanabana*, Xiomara Ardolina's sleek place is the premier Left Coast spot for *nuevo latino*. 69 N. Raymond Ave., Pasadena (626-796-2520 or www.xiomararestaurant.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. French/Latin $$

SOUTH BAY

AVENUE The room is as casually luxe as a V-necked cashmere sweater. The menu, thanks to owner Christian Shaffer (of Chloe), changes monthly (but the foie gras remains) and might include roasted parsnip soup with Tahitian vanilla, stout-battered oysters with pistachio cream, and seared venison with celery root, Chinese long beans, and sour cherries. Don't miss the cheese plate or, if you've still got a pulse, the white chocolate crème brûlée. 1141 Manhattan Ave., Manhattan Beach (310-802-1973). D Wed.–Sun. Full bar. American $$$

CAFÉ PIERRE Forget any laid-back beach-town vibes. This bistro dishes out French arrogance with the best of them, along with surprisingly creative cuisine, such as pumpkin ravioli in basil cream sauce. 317 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Manhattan Beach (310-545-5252). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. Cal-French $$

MICHI This upmarket eatery with a sushi bar is in a setting so spacious you can't even eavesdrop on the next table. Stroll in for the Gorgonzola rib eye, and stroll out content. 903 Manhattan Ave., Manhattan Beach (310-376-0613). D Mon.–Sat. Full bar. Fusion $$$ LA

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Buying a Car the Right Way

Guide for Consumers

By Kristin Witzenburg



Hybrid engines. Quattro drive. Direct Injection. Tighter alignment. Engineered dimensions. Those who toured the January auto shows and read the latest motor trends know that this spring brings an exciting line-up of new models, features, technology and designs. Even if you love the car you're in, you'll probably want to shop for autos this spring just to see what's new!

AMERICAN FIRST: 300 HORSE-POWER SERVICE

American First Credit Union in Orange County is fully geared up to finance new auto dreams OR refinance your existing car. With the same rates for new and used cars and great deals on refinancing your bank loan to a lower rate credit union loan, American First stands by its members and its community. Dedicated to service, American First knows this is why members keep coming back, car after truck after SUV, to finance with them.

Through their partnership with Autoland, American First is dedicated to helping their members get the vehicles they want at the best price, with affordable payments and friendly, convenient service. In fact, go online at www.cuforoc.com for American First's easy three-step process to pick a car, pick a payment, and apply for a loan.

"Pre-approvals are an excellent way to shop for an auto," says Ryan Zilker, AVP of Marketing for American First. "Our members love having our pre-approvals on hand when they walk into a dealership. They get undivided attention, the upper hand in negotiating, and the peace of mind knowing they won't have to endure yet another negotiation at the finance desk." Nonetheless, he notes, for those members that forget the pre-approval or tend to buy more on impulse, American First lends directly at hundreds of dealers in and around Orange County through its partnership with Credit Union Direct Lending.

American First locations in La Habra, Buena Park, Mission Viejo, Orange, Placentia, and Tustin provide convenient in person service. Or call (800) CU-FOR-OC or visit www.cuforoc.com for loan and service access.

Refinancing and auto loan can be a headache when there's no motivated dealer trying to sell you a car along with the loan. But American First treats its members and the community to a hassle-free process because they welcome refinances. Their great rates can lower your payment, lower the overall cost of your loan, and get you that much closer to the payoff.

Autos, motorcycles, boats and RVs are all financed at American First with the same easy, convenient, and friendly process. "We get you there," American First's slogan, is why they strive so hard to be THE credit union for Orange County.

SOUTHLAND CREDIT UNION: ENGINEERED PERFORMANCE

You may think a loan is a loan is a loan when it comes to buying your new vehicle.

In many cases you'd probably be correct, but not when it comes to Southland Credit Union. Southland realizes that it's more than just a loan; it's your car, your way to and from work, your keys to a get-away vacation, perhaps even an expression of your personality.

That's why Southland Credit Union is committed to creating a quality service experience for every Member that is second to none. Southland offers many unique loan programs with some of the lowest rates around. Southland Credit Union offers a selection of auto-buying services to make finding and purchasing the vehicle of your dreams an enjoyable experience.

Southland Credit Union also offers many low cost insurance programs including: Mechanical Breakdown Insurance, Guaranteed Auto Protection (GAP) Insurance and Life and Disability Insurance. Unlike plans you would purchase at a dealership, Southland offers insurance plans that cost much less and cover so much more.

Residents of Orange County and select LA Gateway Cities are eligible to join. Call a Financial Service Representative at 800.426.1917 or visit www.SouthlandCU.org to apply online and receive an answer in just minutes. Then drive off in the vehicle of your dreams today!

LA FINANCIAL: THE HEMI V-8 OF CREDIT UNIONS

LA Financial has one of the largest geographic charters – anyone who lives or works in Los Angeles County can join.

Their AutoExpert program will find any new or used car, secure a great price, and handle all the paperwork. Best of all, the service is completely free. They'll even deliver the car right to any LA Financial branch.

Also connected to Credit Union Direct Lending, LA Financial provides auto loans at over 300 dealers around the County.

Consumer advocates, LA Financial is particularly focused on serving everyone in the community with a special emphasis on the Hispanic community.



They are advocates for financial literacy, protection from 0% financing gimmicks and expensive auto warranty programs and have been educating the community through communication and education. At www.lafinancial.org/spanish.html, members and anyone in the community can find full access to financial services and financial education in Spanish. LA Financial takes its pledge of "Anytime, Any Place, Anywhere," service to heart with this commitment.

"One thing many people may not know about credit unions is how sophisticated they can be with their electronic services," says Renee Mackanin, VP of Marketing. "For example, at LA Financial you can apply online for a consumer or mortgage loan and receive and answer in minutes. You can pay bills from your checking account and set up recurring payments. You can even order checks online, and view copies of cancelled ones. Credit Unions like LA Financial have been at the leading edge of technology development, even before most big banks, because we're not-for-profit, we're all about service."





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Southland Credit Union serves people who live, work, attend school or worship in Orange County and select LA gateway cities.

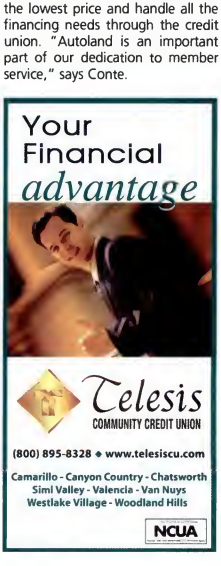
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TELESIS: REVVED UP WITH AUTOLAND

Telesis Community Credit Union is particularly satisfied with the consulting aspect Autoland brings to their member service. "Members have free access to completely unbiased advice about new and used cars through Autoland, with no obligation to buy or even finance here," says Chris Conte, VP of Marketing for Telesis Community Credit Union. "Members can talk with an expert about auto reliability and customer satisfaction of makes and models. Members can seek advice on what car best meets their needs – for budget and price; for their specific needs such as family size, types of recreational activities, where they live; and so forth." If a member does choose a car and wishes to use Autoland to purchase their car, Autoland will seek competitive bids and find the right car at the lowest price and handle all the financing needs through the credit union. "Autoland is an important part of our dedication to member service," says Conte.



"Our main objective is to provide the absolute best service and every convenience we can think of. Autoland is just one of many partnerships we have to enhance our member's financial experience," says Conte. Aside from offering traditional consumer products and service, Telesis offers business products such as business checking and revolving lines of credit, Business Real Estate loans, and Small Business Administration (SBA) loans. In addition, Telesis hosts a variety of seminars and workshops to educate business owners and community residents on successful financial management. "We take great pride in helping the businesses in our community achieve their financial goals," said Jean Faenza, Executive Vice President of Telesis Community Credit Union. "Our vision and goal is to "Deliver quality personal services efficiently to the member-owners of Telesis Community Credit Union and to exceed member expectations and become the primary service provider through continued growth of existing and future services."

Today, Telesis Community Credit Union serves anyone living, working, attending school full time, or worshipping within the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys, as well as all of Ventura County. Telesis has been in operation since 1966. To learn more about Telesis Community Credit Union go online at www.telesiscu.com.

CREDIT UNION: HIGHEST RETAINED VALUE

No matter what the financial product, credit unions provide the best value in the market. Credit unions are not-for profit, so revenues are cycled back to members in the form of lower fees, better rates, superior service, and unique products and services. Auto loans are a hallmark product of credit unions – among the very best of credit union services. Try any of the credit unions in this special experience, and experience the credit union difference. Visit www.creditunions-la.com for more information.

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R.Kenton Nelson



After Mr. Winslow's Garden oil on canvas *62" x 62"*

R. Kenton Nelson - Viewmaster

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GUIDE

EDITED BY
GIA LAUREN
GITTLESON



SPECTACULUM CARNIS, 1998, BY MARK RYDEN/COLLECTION OF CHRIS AND JESSICA LOVENO

MUSEUM

LOW-BROW HIGH CONCEPT

Mark Ryden's carnivalesque pantheon of Abe Lincolns, Jesus Christs, fuzzy bunnies, little girls, and slabs of meat are on view in WONDERTOONEL: PAINTINGS BY MARK RYDEN, the controversial artist's first solo museum show. *Opens Feb. 26. Pasadena Museum of California Art, 490 E. Union St., Pasadena, 626-568-3665.*

THE TOP TEN

1 LOS ANGELES MASTER CHORALE Grant Gershon's group supplies the vocals for the L.A. premiere of Tan Dun's *Water Passion After Saint Matthew* while percussionists play stones, chimes, and soda bottles. *Call for times. Tickets, $19–$79. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., 213-972-7282.* **MAR. 20 AND 22.**

2 DAVID HOCKNEY The artist returns to his watercolors and the stamping grounds of his youth for his latest show, *After a Secret Knowledge: Painting the East Yorkshire Landscape. L.A. Louver, 45 N. Venice Blvd., Venice, 310-822-4955.* **OPENS FEB. 26.**



3 SYNCHROME KINEIDOSCOPE CONCERT Artist Stanton MacDonald-Wright explored synchronism, a movement that merged light and sound, by building the Synchrome Kineidoscope. Restorer Randy Sprout gives the way-cool color-light machine a spin after 30 years in mothballs. *At 3. Tickets, $5–$8. MOCA Grand Avenue, 250 S. Grand Ave., 213-626-6222.* **MAR. 13.**

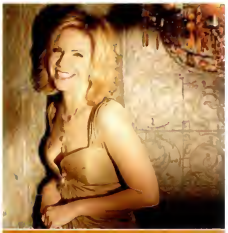


4 IMPROVOGRAPHY 2005 It's easy for tap dancer Savion Glover to think on his feet when he's got a soundtrack fueled by rock, hip-hop, jazz, and soul. *Call for times. Tickets, $20–$49.50. Kodak Theater at Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 213-480-3232.* **MAR. 22–26.**



5 13TH ANNUAL A NIGHT AT SARDI'S Peter Gallagher (above) emcees the *Side by Side by Sondheim* revue, and Laurie Burrows Grad, who launched this event, gets her due. Lorna Luft, Victor Garber, Jennifer Garner, and Zooey Deschanel belt out a few numbers. (Proceeds benefit Alzheimer's Association.) *At 6:30. Tickets, $350–$500. Beverly Hilton Hotel, 9876 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, 310-996-1188.* **MAR. 9.**

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: TWO TREES, EAST YORKSHIRE, 2004, BY DAVID HOCKNEY/PHOTO: RICHARD SCHMIDT/COURTESY L.A. LOUVER, VENICE, CA; PABLO, JOHN RUSSO; SCOTT GROELLER; VIEW ASHEW, VALERIE MEUSER; NO CREDIT



6 ALISON KRAUSS AND UNION STATION The singer-fiddler's look has sure gone Hollywood since her homespun days, but her bluegrass still blooms—especially when devil-on-a-Dobro Jerry Douglas shares the stage. *Call for time and prices. Universal Amphitheater, Universal City, 213-480-3232.* **MAR. 10.**

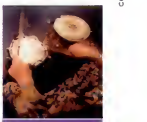


7 THE GOD BOTHERERS Richard Bean's un-PC romp centers on aid workers trying to make a difference—between drinks—in an African nation. A West Coast premiere. *Call for times. Tickets, $15–$24. Furious Theater Company at Posodeno Playhouse Balcony Theater, 39 S. El Molino Ave., Posodeno, 626-356-PLAY.* **OPENS MAR. 22.**

8 MOTLEY CRÜE After solo projects consisting of arrests, rehab, and cosmetic surgery, the Crüe proves that umlauts and fans last forever. *At 8. Tickets, $40–$75. Forum, Manchester Blvd. and Prairie Ave., Inglewood, 213-480-3232.* **MAR. 23.**

9 WIZARD WORLD Collectors of comic books, anime, manga, movies, and video games descend on the pop culture confab. On hand are *Spider-Man* creator Stan Lee, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* writer Joss Whedon, and filmmaker Kevin Smith (right) and his sidekick Jason Mewes (far right). *Call for times. Tickets, $25–$45. Long Beach Convention Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, www.wizarduniverse.com.* **MAR. 18–20.**





10 CALARTS COMMUNITY ARTS DRUMMING CIRCLE Families can BYOD, but the folks from REMO Drums offer a skin-tingling percussive spread. *At 2. Admission, free. REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., 213-237-2800.* **MAR. 5.**

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Connecting You For 40 Years...





KCET's own Captain Infinity leads young viewers through the daytime schedule, offering little facts and life lessons between the programs.

KCEd is the station's newest educational initiative. *A Place of Our Own* and *Los Niños en Su Casa* are the first titles under its umbrella. Both series help childcare providers enhance their skills and better prepare their young charges for kindergarten.

PBS KIDS, for the preschool set, and PBS KIDS GO, for the 5-9 age group, are the brands that have become synonymous with quality, educational non-commercial programming for children.



Long before ***SpongeBob SquarePants*** or ***Blue's Clues***, there was ***Sesame Street***. And ***Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood***. And ***Barney and Friends***. And for parents throughout Southern and Central California, there was an understanding that the PBS children's programs on KCET would be safe, educational, and non-commercial. These important standards of quality and educational content have guided KCET's service to children and those who care for them for 40 years.

While commercial and cable networks had to be forced by the FCC to air 3 hours of educational children's programs per week – amidst their cartoons, superhero battles, and commercials – KCET was providing 50 hours per week.

KCET is where your children and grandchildren learned to count, to recognize letters, to pick out colors and shapes, to understand diversity, to appreciate different cultures, to understand physical differences, to ask questions eagerly, and to play and interact respectfully.

It has also provided a safe haven where parents and childcare providers can be assured that live images of violence or catastrophe will not suddenly intrude on impressionable young minds.

KCET cares also about those who take care of children every day. ***A Place of Our Own*** and ***Los Niños en Su Casa*** are the most recent programs to offer information specifically for parents and all caregivers, to enhance their role as a child's first teacher.

In the community, KCET has provided as much service to children as it has on the air. KCET's ***Ready To Learn*** program has trained over 8,000 childcare providers and parents in the educational use of PBS children's shows, enriching the lives of 90,000 children. It has also distributed over 35,000 free children's books through its First Book program. Throughout Southern and Central California, KCET connects families to the resources they need to help children achieve success in school and in life.

As our world changes, so must the way we touch and influence the next generation.

KCET is proud to be an advocate for our community's youngest citizens.

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JAZZ, ROCK & WORLD

OSTAD MANOOCHEHR SADEGHI Mar. 2. With his *santur* (hammered dulcimer) in hand, the NEA National Heritage fellow demonstrates how cross-cultural influences are changing traditional Persian music. At 8:30. Tickets, $8. REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., 213-237-2800.

LOS LOBOS Mar. 4. L.A.'s favorite sons unplug for a rare acoustic concert. Perla Batalla (a former backup singer for Leonard Cohen) opens. At 8. Tickets, $28–$50. Royce Hall, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-2101.

VISHTEN Mar. 5. This Acadian ensemble mixes fiddle work and step-dancing moves from France, Scotland, and Ireland. At 8. Tickets, $10–$22. Beckman Auditorium, Caltech, 626-395-4652.

WINTER BLUES AT THE LUCKMAN Mar. 5. Blues belter Koko Taylor proves that she's a force of nature, and thundering guitarist Kid Ramos revs up the bandstand boogie. At 8. Tickets, $30–$40. Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Cal State L.A., 323-343-6600.

SAVINA YANNATOU Mar. 6. The Greek singer revels in baroque and Renaissance music from Sephardic Spain, Sardinia, and the Hebrides. At 7. Tickets, $28–$40. Schoenberg Hall, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-2101.

CONCORD JAZZ FESTIVAL Mar. 11. Oleta Adams, Diane Schuur, and Karrin Allyson illustrate every flavor of jazz vocalizing. At 8. Tickets, $25–$50. Cerritos Center, 12700 Center Court Dr., Cerritos, 800-300-4345.

KEITH JARRETT TRIO Mar. 12. Jazz pianist Keith Jarrett sets the improvisational mood with bassist Gary Peacock and drummer Jack DeJohnette. At 8. Tickets, $38–$75. Royce Hall, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-2101.

A SOUNDS ECLECTIC EVENING Mar. 12. After Coldplay, Café Tacuba, and oh-so-pensive Blue Nile singer Paul Buchanan grace the stage, the big donors groove at the after-party with DJ Mark Farina. (Proceeds benefit KCRW.) At 7:45. Tickets, $40–$300. Universal Amphitheater, Universal City, 888-600-KCRW.

SONNY ROLLINS Mar. 16. The tenor saxophonist aims straight ahead. At 8. Tickets, $26–$84. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., 213-850-2000.

REVEREND HORTON HEAT Mar. 18. One night with the Rev should be enough to convert all to the Church of Psychobilly. At 8. Tickets, $20. Henry Fonda Music Box Theater, 6126 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 213-480-3232.

DOUGIE MACLEAN Mar. 26. The Scottish guitarist-fiddler wraps up the Neighborhood Acoustic Series. At 8. Tickets, $25. Neighborhood Church, 301 N. Orange Grove Blvd., Pasadena, 626-791-0411.



What's Bruin

UCLA lifts the curtain and crosses a new threshold

Glorya Kaufman Hall (where anthropology, theater, and dance merge under the aegis of UCLA's Department of World Arts and Culture) reopens for the **WAC Is Back Open House** and the **Faculty Festival of Works**. Events include screenings, a photography exhibit, and a production choreographed by guest artist Rennie Harris. *Mar. 11–12. UCLA, Westwood. Visit www.wac.ucla.edu.*

RENDERING: E. LIBBEY

WORLD MOSAIC Mar. 31. Tibetan Buddhist nun Chöying Drolma and guitarist Steve Tibbetts get into the mystic with chants and ambient sounds. At 8. Tickets, $15-$25. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 866-468-3399.

CLASSICAL & EXPERIMENTAL

LANG LANG & CHINA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Mar. 3. The superstar pianist fronts the orchestra in performances of Bela Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* Suite and Hua Yanjun and Wu Zuqian's *Moon Reflections*. At 8. Tickets, $38-$60. Royce Hall, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-2101.

MUSICIANS FROM MARLBORO Mar. 5. This 30th-anniversary tour features Mozart's String Quintet in B-flat Major and Mendelssohn's String Octet in E-flat Major. At 8. Tickets, $18-$28. Schoenberg Hall, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-2101.

MUSICA ANGELICA Mar. 12 and 13. Violinists Rachel Podger and Elizabeth Blumenstock tackle Bach's and Vivaldi's concertos for two violins. Tickets, $20-$39. Mar. 12: At 8. Colburn School of Performing Arts, 200 S. Grand Ave. Mar. 13: At 4. All Saints' Episcopal Church, 504 N. Camden Dr., Beverly Hills. Call 310-456-6504.

ENSEMBLE INAUTHENTICA Mar. 16. Violinist Mark Menzies' "Dark Matters" program explores the intensities of the Furies via compositions by Stephen Mosko, Hugh Livingston, and Wolfgang Rihm. At 8:30. Tickets, $10-$18. DEDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., 213-237-2800.

L.A. PHIL'S FIRST NIGHTS Mar. 18. By way of theater, music, and multimedia, actor-director John de Lancie re-creates the debut night of Prokofiev's *Sinfonia concertante*. At 8. Tickets, $36-$125. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., 213-850-2000.

CALIFORNIA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA Mar. 18-19. Mezzo-soprano Suzanna Guzmán augments the "Passport to Paris" program with pieces from Bizet's *Carmen* and Loewe's *Gigi*. At 8. Tickets, $30-$90. Ambassador Auditorium, 131 S. Saint John Ave., Pasadena, 626-300-8200.

ANTARES Mar. 28-29. The foursome presents Paul Moravec's 2004 Pulitzer-winning composition, *Tempest Fantasy*, for Music at LACMA's "Spring Festival: Part I." At 8. Tickets, $5-$20. Leo S. Bing Theater, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., 323-857-6010.

FETES, FESTS & FUND-RAISERS

FOOD FARE 2005 Mar. 3. Top toques do double duty for this foodie fest that sports lunch and dinner shifts. A well-stocked silent auction is icing on the cake. (Proceeds benefit Planned Parenthood Los Angeles.) Lunch: 10:30-2:30. Tickets, $125-$150. Dinner: 6-9:30. Tickets, $175-$200. Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main St., Santa Monica, 310-395-0098.

AN EVENING IN THE CITY OF LIGHT Mar. 5. The Junior League and media sponsor *Los Angeles* magazine honor Evelyn H. Lauder at this black-tie gala. Christie's Los Angeles president Andrea Fiuczynski wields the gavel at the auction. (Proceeds benefit Junior League of Los Angeles.) At 6:30. Tickets, $250-$375. Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel, 9500 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, 323-957-4280.

4TH ANNUAL L.A. "BLIND" WINE TASTING AND AUCTION Mar. 13. Wineries such as Grgich Hills, Qupe, and Buttonwood uncork their finest vintages. (Proceeds benefit Foundation Fighting Blindness.) 2-5. Tickets, $100. Le Meridien, 465 S. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills, 310-445-8863.

A SOOLIP WEDDING 2005 Mar. 13. Soolip Paperie & Press and media sponsor *Los Angeles* throw a bridal fashion show with Harry Winston jewels, Monique Lhuillier gowns, and Smashbox cosmetics. 11-3. Tickets, $55. Hotel Figueroa, 939 S. Figueroa St., 310-860-1300.

6TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL VINTAGE POSTER FAIR Mar. 16-20. Themes such as Cuban movies, travel, liqueurs, and war propaganda are rendered in belle epoque, constructivist, and futurist styles. Call for times. Tickets, $10-$15. Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood, www.posterfair.com.

WESTWEEK 2005: PACIFIC DESIGN CENTER CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF DESIGN EXCELLENCE Mar. 30-31. The Blue Whale throws a party featuring the Swedish consulate's *Beyond Blonde* exhibition, photographer Jed Darland's *Sexitecture* show, and courtesy of shelter mags galore, programming for insiders. Call for times and prices. Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood, 310-657-0800.

THEATER, PERFORMANCE & CABARET

OPENINGS

EVITA Mar. 1-13. Director-producer Hal Prince and choreographer Larry Fuller freshly tweak Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's material girl. Call for times. Tickets, $42.50-$67.50. Pantages Theater, 6233 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 213-365-3500.

DOUBT Opens Mar. 4. Playwright John Patrick Shanley (*Moonstruck*) looks at a neighborhood priest and a nun who suspects that his intentions go beyond the cloth.



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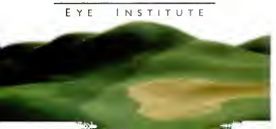
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A West Coast premiere. **Call for times and prices. Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena, 626-356-7529.**

JULIUS CAESAR Opens Mar. 4. This play offers more intrigue than an Eisner-Ovitz meeting. **Call for times. Tickets, $20–$40. A Noise Within, Masonic Temple Building, 234 S. Brand Blvd., Glendale, 818-240-0910.**

KINO AND TERESA Mar. 4–20. James Lujan's take on *Romeo and Juliet* is set in 17th-century Santa Fe, with the warring families of Taos Pueblo and Spanish heritage. **Call for times. Tickets, $12–$20. Wells Fargo Theater, Autry National Center, 4700 Western Heritage Way, 866-468-3399.**

THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS Mar. 9–13. The Chicken Ranch is open for business. **Call for times and prices. Kodak Theater, Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 213-480-3232.**

DISNEY'S THE LION KING Opens Mar. 10. Composers Elton John and Tim Rice and director Julie Taymor can feel the love all the way to the bank. **Call for times. Tickets, $23–$73. Orange County Performing Arts Center, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, 714-556-2787.**

THE INVISIBLE MAN Mar. 11. The roving Aquila Theater stages H.G. Wells's Victorian-era play about the line between curiosity and science. **At 8. Tickets, $10–$22. Beckman Auditorium, Caltech, 626-395-4652.**

BOOMER BABES Mar. 11–19. Writer-actors Nancy Alspaugh, Janice Ryan, and Marilyn Kentz sing and sass through their hot flashes. **At 8. Tickets, $25. Theater Unlimited, 10943 Camarillo St., North Hollywood, 866-811-4111.**

EVERYTHING BAD AND BEAUTIFUL Mar. 11–25. Sandra Bernhard adds new rants to some classic bits. **Call for times. Tickets, $22.50–$50. Silent Movie Theater, 611 N. Fairfax Ave., 323-655-2510.**

ANDREA MARCOVICCI: ANDREA SINGS ASTAIRE Mar. 18. The cabaret singer tells the story of Fred Astaire's life with songs by the Gershwins, Harold Arlen, and Irving Berlin. **At 8. Tickets, $30–$55. La Mirada Theater for the Performing Arts, 14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada, 562-944-9801.**

MITCH ALBOM'S TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE Opens Mar. 18. This feel-good three-Kleenexer goes from the page to the stage. **Call for times. Tickets, $18–$25. Long Beach Playhouse, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-494-1014.**

THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES Opens Mar. 18. Molière's comedy lights on the best little graduate of Monsieur Arnolphe's finishing school. **Call for times. Tickets, $20–$40. A Noise Within, Masonic Temple Building, 234 S. Brand Blvd., Glendale, 818-240-0910.**

SHAG WITH A TWIST Opens Mar. 18. Artist Josh Agle (aka Shag) and choreographer-director Cindy Bradley set a murder mystery at a retro-hip Tupperware party. **Call for times. Tickets, $35–$45. Los Angeles Theater Center, 514 S. Spring St., 888-515-SHAG.**

NATIONAL PASTIME Opens Mar. 19. James Reynolds (*Days of Our Lives*) directs his son, Jed Reynolds, in Bryan Harnetiaux's story about Jackie Robinson's major league move. **Call for times. Tickets, $17–$35. Fremont Center Theater, 1000 Fremont Ave., South Pasadena, 626-441-5977.**

ASPECTS OF ALICE AND GULLIVER Mar. 19–20. Flying actors, live chess pieces, and singing flowers fill the Black Light Theater of Prague's riff on Alice's and Gulliver's trips. **Call for times and prices. Irvine Barclay Theater, 4242 Campus Dr., Irvine, 949-553-2422.**

2ND ANNUAL FIDDLER ON THE ROOF SING-ALONG Mar. 20. Come in costume, warble, enjoy! **At 7. Tickets, $25. University of Judaism, 15600 Mulholland Dr., Bel-Air, 310-440-1547.**

DAVE GORMAN'S GOOGLEWHACK ADVENTURES Opens Mar. 23. The British comedian (who bagged HBO's 2004 Comedy Arts Festival Jury Award) reveals the secret of how to do everything but work on his novel. **Call for times. Tickets, $20–$25. Macgowan Little Theater, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-2101.**

ANDRE GREGORY: AFTER DINNER Mar. 23–26. The actor-filmmaker shares a solo piece that delves into his 1981 cult classic *My Dinner with Andre*. **At 8:30. Call for prices. REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., 213-237-2800.**

SUZY WILLIAMS, NICK ARIONDO & KAHLIL SABBAGH Mar. 25. Suzy torches, Nick squeezes, and Kahlil

Q+A QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, DISH... IT'S ALL HERE

Paul Feig



Paul Feig (creator of the cult TV show *Freaks and Geeks* and author of the upcoming book *Superstud: How I Became a 24-Year-Old Virgin*) stars, with Illeana Douglas and Richard Kind, in Annabelle Gurwitch's play **Fired**. Before hitting the boards, he spent a few moments on the couch.

You must be saving thousands on a shrink by working out your issues in public and letting other geeks know they're not alone. That's my goal—to always throw myself on the sword.

Are you going to fall on the sword in *Fired*? It's a story about when I was Ronald McDonald for a summer and I wanted to get fired and couldn't. A lot of people would say you've made a bad career choice when you have to wear a really humiliating costume.

How do you bounce back after you get fired in Hollywood? I'm an optimist. For me, the greatest thing about sleep is I'm like an Etch-A-Sketch. When I go to sleep, the Etch-A-Sketch shakes. The next day it's all clear again.

What is the one thing you said you'd never do but did? I was militant about hanging on to my virginity until I exchanged wedding vows. By the time I hit 23, I realized it was no longer possible to wait. I felt like I was going to have a heart attack. It wasn't until I was 24 and had a girlfriend that I gave in. I'm glad I did. It helped get rid of a lot of acne. And insanity.

Mar. 16–20. Call for times. Tickets, $20–$45. L.A. Theater Works' The Play's the Thing at Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 310-827-0889.

CAROL SHERIDAN

lays on excellent vibes. **At 8. Tickets, $10. Genghis Cohen Cantina, 740 N. Fairfax Ave., West Hollywood, 323-653-0640.**

THE UNDERPANTS Opens Mar. 29. Steve Martin has adapted Carl Sternheim's 1910 comedy about a landlady's clueless husband and her long line of suitors. **Call for times and prices. Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, 949-497-ARTS.**

SLEUTH Opens Mar. 30. In Anthony Shaffer's mystery, a well-bred husband sets out to nail his wife's nouveau riche lover. **Call for times and prices. Falcon Theater, 4252 Riverside Dr., Burbank, 818-955-8101.**

THE GARY PLAYS Opens Mar. 31. Under the aegis of Padua Playwrights, Murray Mednick presents a new trilogy about a former actor who must deal with destitution in L.A., not to mention his son's murder. **Call for times. Tickets, $20–$30. Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave., Venice, 310-823-0710.**

CONTINUING

FLOYD COLLINS Composer Adam Guettel and writer Tina Landau's musical focuses on the first American media frenzy and the miner trapped in the middle of it. **Call for times. Tickets, $35. West Coast Ensemble, 522 N. La Brea Ave., Hollywood, 323-525-0022.**

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: CELEBRITY AUTOBIOGRAPHIES Eugene Pack's troupe gets lots of laughs when it reads from the autobiographies of Beyoncé, Debbie Reynolds, and Joe Namath. **Call for times. Tickets, $8. Room 5, 143 N. La Brea Ave., 323-769-5511.**

THE MOUSETRAP It was a dark and stormy night at Agatha Christie's boardinghouse. **Call for times and prices. Long Beach Playhouse Mainstage, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-494-1014.**

THE SMOKE AND ICE FOLLIES Playwright Mark Eisman serves up a family of figure skaters in search of perfect partners. A world premiere. **Call for times. Tickets, $20. Road Theater Company, 5108 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, 866-811-4111.**

TARTUFFE For Molière's play about seduction and salvation, director Jon Keelan mixes and matches historical periods with commedia dell'arte touches. **Call for times and prices. The Actors' Gang, 6209 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, 323-465-0566.**

CLOSING

MORE Through Mar. 6. Yeardley Smith's autobiographical one-woman comedy centers on her hunger for fame. Judith Ivey directs. **Call for times and prices. Falcon Theater, 4252 Riverside Dr., Burbank, 818-955-8101.**

NUNSENSE Through Mar. 6. Betty Garrett, Lee Meriwether, and Bridget Hanley star in Dan Goggin's musical about the Little Sisters of Hoboken. **Call for times. Tickets, $10–$30. Theater West, 3333 Cahuenga Blvd. West, 323-851-7977.**

THE GREEN ROOM Through Mar. 9. Beverly Olevin's dramedy pits a cast of actors (and their egos) against one another. **Call for times. Tickets, $18–$20. Theater 40, 241 Moreno Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-364-0535.**

CORPSE Through Mar. 12. Gerald Moon's comedic thriller sets a ne'er-do-well twin against his successful brother. **Call for times and prices. Long Beach Playhouse Studio Theater, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-494-1014.**

ACCOMPLICE Through Mar. 13. Simon Levy directs Rupert Holmes's spoof that's reminiscent of those veddy British thrillers. **Call for times and prices. Colony Theater Company, 555 N. 3rd St., Burbank, 818-558-7000.**

ONCE ON THIS ISLAND Through Mar. 13. Lyricist Lynn Ahrens and composer Stephen Flaherty, the duo behind *Ragtime* and *Seussical*, present their Tony-nominated Caribbean version of *The Little Mermaid*. **Call for times. Tickets, $35–$60. International City Theater, 300 E. Ocean Ave., Long Beach, 562-436-4610.**

BIRTHDAY GIRL Through Mar. 20. Natalia Lazarus's one-woman comedy zeroes in on the Big Three-O. **Call for times. Tickets, $15. Promenade Playhouse, 1404 3rd Street Promenade, Santa Monica, 310-656-8070, ext. 17.**

THE GOAT, OR WHO IS SYLVIA? Through Mar. 20. Brian Kerwin and Cynthia Mace star in Edward Albee's Tony winner about a man's bleating heart. **Call for**

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Sun, Mar 20 at 7 p.m.
Tue, Mar 22 at 7:30 p.m.
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times. Tickets, $34-$52. Mark Taper Forum, 135 N. Grand Ave., 213-628-2772.

THUNDER AT DAWN Through Mar. 20. Max Enscoe's modern-dress Easter tale (inspired by a Hemingway short story) focuses on the soldiers who were on "nail detail." Call for times and prices. Lamb's Players Theater, 11142 Orange Ave., Coronado, 619-437-6050.

ACME LOVE MACHINE Through Mar. 26. Wil Wheaton (*Star Trek: The Next Generation*) has some fun in the orbit of sketch comedy. Call for times. Tickets, $15. ACME Comedy Theater, 135 N. La Brea Ave., 323-525-0202.

YELLOWMAN Through Mar. 26. The complications of race and love take center stage in this play by Dale Orlandersmith. Call for times. Tickets, $25. Fountain Theater, 5060 Fountain Ave., Hollywood, 323-663-1525.

AS YOU LIKE IT Through Mar. 27. Arden you glad Sir Peter Hall's take on Shakespeare's confection features daughter Rebecca Hall? Call for times and prices. Ahmanson Theater, 135 N. Grand Ave., 213-628-2772.

THE BIG EVER AFTER Through Mar. 27. Amy Heidish's comedy blends characters from fairy tales and pulp novels. (Cinderella's stepsisters wind up in a bit titled "The Leather Girls.") Call for times. Tickets, $20. Ark Theater, 1647 S. La Cienega Blvd., 323-969-1707.

HAPPY END Through Mar. 27. The Pacific Resident Theater reprises its first show: Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht's musical comedy about some members of the demimonde. Call for times. Tickets, $22-$27. Pacific Resident Theater, 703 Venice Blvd., Venice, 310-822-8392.

DANCE

BARRAGE Mar. 1-6. Violinists aplenty fuel a foot-stomping blend of Celtic, American, and Ukrainian dance in Barrage's *Vagabond Tales*. Call for times. Tickets, $36.50-$45.50. Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza, 2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks, 213-480-3232.

BEIJING MODERN DANCE COMPANY Mar. 4-5. Pink Floyd's *The Wall* provides the soundtrack to *Rear Light*, a look at China's Generation Y and its clash with tradition. Call for times. Tickets, $20-$50. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., 213-972-0711.

DONNA UCHIZONO COMPANY Mar. 9-13. The New York-based modern dance company makes its L.A. debut with *Butterflies in My Head*, a piece that slices through predictability. At 8:30. Tickets, $14-$32. REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., 213-237-2800.

LULA WASHINGTON DANCE THEATER Mar. 18-19. The local choreographer observes a milestone at the "25th Anniversary Retrospective," which showcases her latest work, *One Man, One Woman, and the Rest Is History*... (Mar. 18), and pays homage to Duke Ellington at "Voices of Jazz—05" with *A Duke for the 90s*! (Mar. 19). At 8. Tickets, $30-$40. Luckman Fine Arts Complex, Cal State L.A., 323-343-6600.

STOMP Mar. 18-20. Brooms, poles, and lighters provide the percussion for Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas's box-office smash. Call for times. Tickets, $15-$45.50. Long Beach Performing Arts Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-436-3661.

READINGS, LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

SCI-ARC SPRING 2005 LECTURE SERIES Mar. 2. The architecture school opens its doors to developer Tom Gilmore, who discusses "Urban Redevelopment and Micro Sociologies in Downtown L.A." At 7. Admission, free. 960 E. 3rd St., 213-613-2200.

VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE AGES Mar. 2. Documentarian-historian Michael Wood gets to the crux of some bloodthirsty brutes. At 4. Admission, free. Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., West L.A., 310-440-7300.

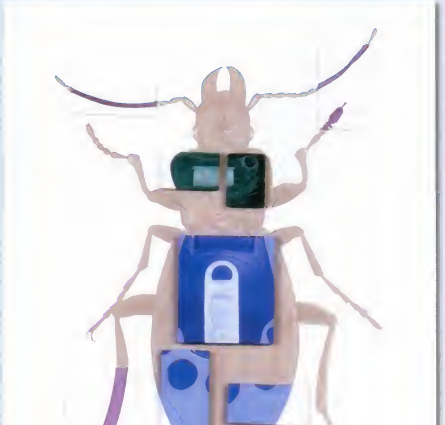
NEW SCHOOL OF COOKING Mar. 3-26. The March lineup includes "India on Fire" (Mar. 3), "High Tea" (Mar. 5), the Cheese Store of Beverly Hills' "Cheese Seminar" (Mar. 16), "Revisiting the Wok" (Mar. 18), and "Authentic French Crepes" (Mar. 26). Call for times and prices. 8690 Washington Blvd., Culver City, 310-842-9702.

DUTTON'S BEVERLY HILLS BOOKS Mar. 4-23. The literati get lit with Daniel Silva (*Prince of Fire*) on Mar. 4, James Ragan (*In the Talking Hours*) on Mar. 6, Steve Erickson (*Our Ecstatic Days*) on Mar. 8, Ann Lamott (*Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith*) on Mar. 15, and Azadeh Moaveni (*Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America and American in Iran*) on Mar. 23. Call for times. Admission, free. 447 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-281-0997.

A.S. BYATT Mar. 5. The Booker Prize–winning novelist—whose *Possession: A Romance* and *Morpho Eugenia* have made it to the big screen—reads from her latest, *The Little Black Book of Stories*. At 8. Tickets, $20-$35. Royce Hall, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-2101.

BOWERS MUSEUM Mar. 5, 12, and 13. Archaeologist Lynn Dodd touches on luxe baubles in "Exotica in the Ancient Near East" (Mar. 5), Nicholas Clapp (*Sheba: Through the Desert of the Legendary Queen*) gets soleful with the "Queen of Sheba's Left Foot" (Mar. 12), and belly dancers usher in the "Queen of Sheba Closing

MUSEUM



CHRYSOCRABRUS FEROMETERIS © 2004, BY PAUL PAIEMENT/COURTESY HEATHER MARX GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO

A Bug's Life

Behold the creepy-crawly world of a genus genius

The L.A.-based artist Paul Paiement takes on pop culture and entomology in **Paul Paiement: Hybrids 1.0–3.5**, morphing bugs and butterflies into Nintendo joysticks, Walkman players, and other trappings of 21st-century consumerism. *Opens Mar. 13. Laguna Art Museum, 307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, 949-494-8971.*





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Ceremony" (Mar. 13). **Call for times and prices. 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana. 714-567-3600.**

IT'S SUNDAY, WHERE IS YOUR HAT? Mar. 6. Accessorize accordingly when the California African American Museum explores "hattitude." **11-5. Call for prices. California African American Museum, 600 State Dr., Exposition Park. 213-744-2432.**

SMITHSONIAN WEEK: FASHION, FOLKLORE, AND FAULT LINES Mar. 6–12. Various Long Beach venues host a series of lectures, including "Vaqueros, Gauchos, and Other Caballeros," "You Are What You Wear," and "Volcanoes and Earthquakes Along the Pacific." **Visit www.smithsonianweek.com.**

MUSIC CENTER SPEAKER SERIES Mar. 8 and 9. This new series goes stratospheric and books former president Bill Clinton. **At 8. Call for prices. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 153 N. Grand Ave., 310-271-6631.**

ALOUD AT THE CENTRAL LIBRARY Mar. 8, 16, and 24. This month features M.G. Lord discussing *Astro Turf: The Private Life of Rocket Science* (Mar. 8), James B. Stewart reading from *DISNEYWAR* (Mar. 16), and Nobel laureate Douglas Osheroff, astronomer Virginia Trimble, and physicist Valentine Telegdi digging into "The Letters of Richard Feynman" (Mar. 24). **At 7. Admission, free; reservations required. Los Angeles Central Library, 630 W. 5th St., 213-228-7025.**

BERGAMOT BOOKS & MESS (MESS & ECOLOGY SUPER SESSIONS) Mar. 9. *Hollywood Reporter* writer (and former Corman employee) Beverly Gray shares deep dish from her book *Roger Corman: Blood-Sucking Vampires, Flesh-Eating Cockroaches, and Driller Killers.* **At 7:30. Admission, free. Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Bldg. G5-B, Santa Monica, 310-306-7330.**

FROM TOKYO ROSE TO THE PATRIOT ACT: PROPAGANDA AND ITS IMPACT ON CIVIL LIBERTIES Mar. 12. For the second installment of this five-part series, actors Pat Morita and George Takai join Cal State L.A. acting dean Mitchell T. Maki to discuss the impact of World War II on the Constitution. **At 2. Call for prices. Japanese American National Museum, 369 E. 1st St., 213-625-0414.**

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES Mar. 16. Comedian–talking head Dennis Miller pours on the acid regin. **At 8. Call for prices. Pasadena Civic Auditorium, 300 E. Green St., Pasadena. 800-508-9301.**

GLUING TOGETHER A WORLD: WEST COAST ASSEMBLAGE ART Mar. 18. After *Art in America* editor Michael Duncan talks about the assemblage scene in 1940s and 1950s California, artist-performer George Herms stages *Happy Birthday Milieu.* **At 7. Call for prices. Norton Simon Museum of Art, 411 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, 626-449-6840.**

KAFFEE UND KULTUR: L.A.'S EMIGRÉ LIFE OF THE 1940S AND 1950S Mar. 20. After CalArts' New Millennium Players explores the works of composer Arnold Schoenberg, *Los Angeles Times* film critic Kenneth Turan moderates a discussion on the artistic contributions of L.A.'s émigré population. Panelists include writer (and grandson of composer Ernst Toch) Lawrence Weschler. **At 4:30. Tickets, $15–$20. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 866-468-3399.**

COOKING WITH JEAN FRANÇOIS Mar. 26. Bone up on osso buco, racks, and chops with La Cachette's Jean François Meteigner. **9-12:30. Registration, $100 (includes wine and lunch). La Cachette, 10506 Santa Monica Blvd., West L.A., 310-470-4992.**

MUSEUMS

OPENINGS

GEORGE HERMS: HOT SET Opens Mar. 5. Artist Walter Hopps curated this show of the beat artist's jazz-inflected found-object sculptures and assemblages from the 1960s to the present. **Santa Monica Museum of Art, Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Bldg. G1, Santa Monica, 310-586-6488.**

CARLOS GARAICOA Opens Mar. 6. In the first U.S. museum survey of the Cuban artist's work, Garaicoa's installations use architecture as a means to address failed social programs. Among the pieces is *De la serie Nuevas arquitecturas (From the series New Architectures),* in which a futuristic city is constructed out of 76 rice paper lamps. **MOCA Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood, 213-626-6222.**

PAINTING ETHIOPIA: THE LIFE AND WORK OF QES ADAMU TESFAW Opens Mar. 6. Tesfaw's first U.S. solo show covers a range of topics, including Christianity (he was once a priest), military battles, imperial visits, and rural and urban life. **UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-4361.**

CERAMIC MASTERS: THE ART OF YIVIKA & OTTO HEINO & THEIR CONTEMPORARIES Opens Mar. 10. Forrest L. Merrill's collection yields elegant tiles, vases, and perhaps even kiln gods by the Ojai-based Heinos. **Craft and Folk Art Museum, 5814 Wilshire Blvd., 323-937-4230.**

PICASSO'S TOROS Opens Mar. 11. Works on paper illustrate Picasso's bull motif and his 1945 experiments with lithography. **Norton Simon Museum of Art, 411 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, 626-449-6840.**

IMAGES OF FASHION FROM THE COURT OF LOUIS XIV Opens Mar. 12. LACMA shows off its new acquisition, *Bonnart et Berain, Recueil des modes de la cour de France,* a folio Louis XIV and his finance minister created to promote French fashion. **Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., 323-857-6000.**

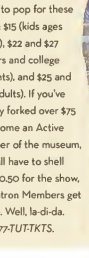
THE ART OF THE JAPANESE SWORD: THE YOSHIHARA TRADITION Opens Mar. 17. The Pacific Asia Museum explores four generations of samurai sword design and the spiritual aspects of the art form. **Pacific Asia Museum, 46 N. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena, 626-449-2742.**

ATTENTION, SHOPPERS

Tut-Tut

Blockbuster show equals boffo B.O.

On March 3, tickets go on sale at LACMA for the Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs exhibit. The returning show (which was a hit in 1978) runs from June 16 to November 15, and ordering in advance gives us plenty of time to secure a loan to pop for these prices: $15 (kids ages 6 to 17), $22 and $27 (seniors and college students), and $25 and $30 (adults). If you've already forked over $75 to become an Active Member of the museum, you still have to shell out $20.50 for the show, but Patron Members get in free. Well, la-di-da. *Call 877-TUT-TKTS.*



CONTINUING & CLOSING

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF CERAMIC ARTS Continuing. Women's "Werk": The Dignity of Craft. **340 S. Garey Ave., Pomona, 909-865-3146.**

BOWERS MUSEUM Closing. Queen of Sheba: Legend and Reality. **2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, 714-567-3600.**

CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM Continuing. African American Artists in Los Angeles, a Survey Exhibition: Pathways (1966–1989); Deconstructing Apartheid: The Photography of Peter Magubane. **600 State Dr., Exposition Park, 213-744-7432.**

CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER Continuing. Body Worlds 2; IMAX films: *Forces of Nature, Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West, The Human Body.* **700 State Dr., Exposition Park. Center: 323-SCIENCE. IMAX Theater: 213-744-2400.**

CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM Continuing. John Kwok Retrospective. **425 N. Los Angeles St., 213-626-5240.**

FIDM MUSEUM & GALLERIES Continuing. 13th Annual Art of Motion Picture Costume Design. **919 S. Grand Ave., 213-622-1200.**

FREDERICK R. WEISMAN MUSEUM OF ART Closing. Chihuly: Los Angeles. **Pepperdine University, Malibu, 310-506-4851.**

FULLERTON MUSEUM CENTER Continuing. The Orange Connection: Orange County's Rock 'n' Roll History. **301 N. Pomona Ave., Fullerton, 714-738-6545.**

GETTY CENTER Closing. Images of Violence in the Medieval World. Continuing. All the Mighty World: The Photographs of Roger Fenton, 1852–1860. **1200 Getty Center Dr., West L.A., 310-440-7300.**

HAMMER MUSEUM Continuing. THING: New Sculpture from Los Angeles. **10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood, 310-443-7000.**

HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, ART COLLECTIONS & BOTANICAL GARDENS Continuing. An Eye for Beauty: Collectors and the History of British Watercolor. **1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, 626-405-2100.**

JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM Continuing. Japan After Perry: Views of Yokohama and Meiji, Japan, 1869. **E. 1st St., 213-625-0414.**

LAGUNA ART MUSEUM Continuing. Surf Culture Redux. **307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, 949-494-8971.**

LONG BEACH MUSEUM OF ART Continuing. Enigma Variations: The Sculpture of John Frame, 1980–2005. **2300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-439-2119.**

LOS ANGELES CENTRAL LIBRARY Closing. Play by Play: A Century of L.A. Sports Photography, 1889–1989. **630 W. 5th St., 213-228-7000.**

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART Continuing. The Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America, 1876–1920: Design for the Modern World. **5905 Wilshire Blvd., 323-857-6000.**

LOS ANGELES TOY, DOLL & AMUSEMENTS MUSEUM Continuing. The Play of Light. **LATDA at the Museum of Neon Art, 501 W. Olympic Blvd., 213-489-9918.**

MOCA GRAND AVENUE Continuing. Visual Music: Into the Unknown: Abstraction from the Collection, 1940–1960. **250 S. Grand Ave., 213-626-6222.**

MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN WEST Continuing. El Norte—The Spanish and Mexican North. **4700 Western Heritage Way, Griffith Park, 323-667-2000.**

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (DOWNTOWN) Continuing. Terry Winters: Paintings, Drawings, Prints, 1994–2004. **1001 Kettner Blvd., San Diego, 858-454-3541.**

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (LA JOLLA) Continuing. Tara Donovan: Haze; Collectors XX: Building a Museum Collection. **700 Prospect St., La Jolla, 858-454-3541.**

MUSEUM OF JURASSIC TECHNOLOGY Continuing. Miracles and Disasters in Renaissance and Baroque Theater Machines; Rotten Luck: An Exhibit of Failing Dice from the Collections of Ricky Jay. **9341 Venice Blvd., Culver City, 310-836-6131.**

MUSEUM OF LATIN AMERICAN ART Closing. Rufino Tamayo: A Search for the Essence; Latin American Artists: A Contemporary Journey. **628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach, 562-437-1689.**

MUSEUM OF NEON ART Continuing. Neon on Tap: An Historical Retrospective of the Great American Beer Sign. **501 W. Olympic Blvd., 213-489-9918.**

CANOPIC COFFINETTE, 1339 B.C.E.

MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS Closing. Jeff Bridges: Pictures. 1649 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego. 619-238-7559.

MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE Continuing. Finding Our Families, Finding Ourselves. 9786 W. Pico Blvd., 310-553-9036.

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM Continuing. Conversations. 900 Exposition Blvd., 213-763-DINO.

NORTON SIMON MUSEUM OF ART Closing. Lost but Found: Assemblage, Collage, and Sculpture, 1920–2002; Nature Transformed. 411 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena. 626-449-6840.

ORANGE COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART Continuing. Beautiful Losers: Contemporary Art and Street Culture. 850 San Clemente Dr., Newport Beach. 949-759-1122.

PALM SPRINGS DESERT MUSEUM Continuing. Lights! Camera! Glamour!; Desert Glass Collectors; Trespassing: Houses x Artists. 101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs. 760-325-7186.

PASADENA MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA ART Closing. Cultivating Pasadena: From Roses to Redevelopment. 490 E. Union St., Pasadena. 626-568-3665.

PASADENA MUSEUM OF HISTORY Continuing. Busch Gardens Centennial Exhibit and Pasadena's Parks Showcase. 470 W. Walnut St., Pasadena. 626-577-1660.

PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM Continuing. Vaccationland U.S.A.; Musclecars: Power to the People. 6060 Wilshire Blvd., 323-930-CARS.

SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART Closing. Past in Reverse: Contemporary Art of East Asia. 1450 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego. 619-232-7931.

SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF ART Closing. The Art of David Ireland: The Way Things Are. Continuing. Through the Green Fuse: Photography by Robert Bueltman; Artful Giving: The Wallis Foundation. 1130 State St., Santa Barbara. 805-963-4364.

SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER Continuing. Driven to Paradise: L.A.'s European Jewish Émigrés of the 1930s and 1940s; Einstein. 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 310-440-4500.

UCR/CALIFORNIA MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY Continuing. Revolution & Commerce: The Legacy of Korda's Portrait of Che Guevara; Observaciones: Enrique Méndez de Hoyos. UC Riverside, 909-787-4787.

UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM (CSULB) Continuing. Candida Höfer: Architecture of Absence. Cal State Long Beach, 562-985-5761.

UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM (UCSB) Continuing. Garry Winogrand: Women Are Beautiful. UC Santa Barbara, 805-893-7564.

FILM, TV & VIDEO

CASSAVETES Continuing. The Museum of Television & Radio's cathode ode features John Cassavetes' small-screen turns. On tap are "In Pursuit of Excellence," an episode that aired on *Bob Hope Presents the Chrysler Theater*, and "Etude in Black," from the series *Columbo*. Call for times. Tickets, $5–$10. Museum of Television & Radio, 465 N. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-786-1091.

7 DUDLEY CINEMA Mar. 2. Roger Corman gets his due when Beverly Gray discusses her latest book, *Roger Corman: Blood-Sucking Vampires, Flesh-Eating Cockroaches, and Driller Killers*, and Adam Simon's doc *Directors on Directors* and Peter Bogdanovich's Corman-inspired *Targets* screen. At 8. Admission, free. Sponta Gallery, 7 Dudley Ave., Venice, 310-306-7330.

22ND ANNUAL WILLIAM S. PALEY TELEVISION FESTIVAL Mar. 2–16. The Museum of Television & Radio books "An Evening with Michael Palin" and for something completely different, honors the brains behind *Jack & Bobby*, *Desperate Housewives*, and *Lost*. Call for times. Tickets, $20–$25. Directors Guild of America, 7920 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood, 866-468-3399.

NAPOLEON COMPLEX: SIX FILMS IN SEARCH OF AN EMPEROR Mar. 4–6 and 11–13. The Getty and the UCLA Film and Television Archive give the little guy the big-screen treatment with screenings of *Napoleon* (1927), *Waterloo* (1970), *The Duellists* (1977), and *The Em-*

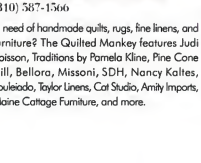
Boutique Buys



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Rebel has kept its unique and charming qualities in a city filled with women's boutiques by offering a variety of trendsetting lines, such as Da-Nang, Raw, Blue Cult, Citizens, Billy Blues, Sanctuary, Velvet, Trina Turk, James Perse, and more! The merchandising style of the friendly staff always keeps the store looking fresh and customers coming back.



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This hip Valley boutique features the freshest fashions of the season, including the hat, trend-setting spring collection of Gaa Los Angeles–exclusively at Gisele Tune. Each piece is an original in this colorful apparel line known for unique, artistic hand-embroidery. Gisele Tune also offers the best selection of Raw 7 far men and women, Juicy, Stitches Jeans and People 4 Peace, plus True Religion for men too. Complete any outfit with a purchase from our "must-have" collection of shoes and accessories by Tylie, Michele Negrin, Hanky Panky, and many more.

peror's New Clothes (2001). **Call for times. Admission, free; reservations required. Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., West L.A., 310-440-7300.**

CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTARY SERIES Mar. 9. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the UCLA Film and Television Archive close their series with the double bill of *Ferry Tales* and *Bus 174*. **At 7:30. Admission, free. James Bridges Theater in Melnitz Hall, UCLA, Westwood, 310-247-3600.**

JACK SKIRBALL SCREENING SERIES Mar. 14. Renée Tajima-Peña's in the house to present *Who Killed Vincent Chen?*, her 1987 documentary about murder and mistaken identity in Detroit. **At 8. Tickets, $6–$8. REDCAT, 631 W. 2nd St., 213-237-2800.**

LES CLASSIQUES DU CINEMA: BRONCO BULLFROG Mar. 16 and 17. Thanks to the British Film Insti-



ON YOUR MARKS

Speed Thrills

Top ten reasons we love the L.A. Marathon

10

Gospel choirs and rock bands getting down on street corners.

9

The "Fitness Training Menu Program," where restaurants like Nick & Stef's Steakhouse have been dishing up *spaghetti allo puttanesco* since January 1.

8

The buffet of biceps on the wheelchair racers.

7

L.A. becoming one big happy family for a few hours.

6

More than 50 charities benefiting from the "Million Dollar Morning."

5

A female runner kicking every guy's ass and winning. (For those keeping score, last year it was 49-year-old Tatyana Pozdnyakova—and she'll be back.)

4

Personalized bibs. (Who could forget GOT BEER?)

3

The prerace "Carbo Load Dinner." (Take that, Dr. Atkins!)

2

Massage therapists on the "Spa on Wheels" ministering to the biathletes between races. (This is for the jocks who cycle 22.7 miles, then run 26.2 miles.)

1

Honda Accord EX-V6 sedans for the winners. (How L.A. is that?)

20th Anniversary City of Los Angeles Marathon. Mar. 6. Visit www.lamarathon.com.

tute's restoration efforts and the American Cinematheque, director Barney Platt-Mills's long-lost indie flick about the bleaker streets of '60s London gets its L.A. premiere. **At 7:30. Tickets, $9. Mar. 16: Egyptian Theater, 6712 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood. Mar. 17: Aero Theater, 1328 Montana Ave., Santa Monica. Call 323-466-FILM.**

A NEW CRITICAL CINEMA: FILM & SOCIAL CRITICISM IN CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICA Mar. 17–19. Filmmakers and critics meet at CalArts and REDCAT to assess the ways in which Latin American movies address the issues of sex, class, family, violence, and politics. Screenings include Geraldo Tort's *De la Calle (Streeter)* and Lucrecia Martel's *La Ciénega (The Swamp)*. **Visit www.redcat.org.**

AN EVENING OF EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC FILMS Mar. 24. The *Visual Music* exhibit is the launching point for kinetochromatic (aka trippy) filmmakers like Oskar Fischinger, Bärbel Neubauer, and Stan Brakhage. **At 6:30. Call for prices. MOCA Grand Avenue, 250 S. Grand Ave., 213-626-6222.**

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK Continuing. Island Packers invites nouveau Cousteaus to swim and snorkel along East Anacapa Island, ride pookers to enjoy low tide on West Anacapa Island, and birders to search for the Santa Cruz Island scrub jay. **Call 805-642-1393 or 805-382-1779.**

DANA WHARF SPORT FISHING & WHALE WATCHING Continuing. If this cetacean shindig doesn't yield any California gray whale sightings, Wharf offers a "whale check" raincheck. **34675 Golden Lantern, Dana Point, 949-496-5794, ext. 7.**

60TH ANNUAL SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL ORCHID SHOW Mar. 4–6. Orchid mavens will go blooming nuts with the array of *Cymbidium*, *Phalaenopsis*, and *Laelia-Cattleya*. And since Santa Barbara has been a hotbed for orchid growers since the early 1900s, local purveyors will be hosting special tours. **9–5. Tickets, $8–$10. Earl Warren Showgrounds, Intersection of Hwy. 101 and Las Positas Rd., Santa Barbara, www.sborchidshow.com.**

SIERRA CLUB–ANGELES CHAPTER Mar. 4–27. 'Tis the season for Mammoth ski trips (Mar. 4–6, 11–13, and 18–20) and backpacking along the falls of Havasu Canyon (Mar. 24–27). **Call 213-387-4287.**

GARDEN EXCHANGE & BACKYARD SALE Mar. 12. Soka University's Botanical Research Center and Nursery celebrates its tenth anniversary with a discussion by ethnobotanist Richard Bugbee on California native plants and their applications. **9-1. Call for prices. Soka University of America, 26800 W. Mulholland Hwy., Calabasas, 818-878-371.**

4TH ANNUAL DYE-NO-MITE DAY Mar. 13. Certified divers get in free for demos featuring vintage equipment and the latest gadgets. **9–5. Non-diver admission, $10.95–$18.95. Aquarium of the Pacific, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-590-3100.**

FOWLER ON THE TOWN: LITTLE ETHIOPIA Mar. 13. Here's a fine reason to join the UCLA Fowler Museum: the chance to traipse down Fairfax for a taste of Ethiopian culture. **At 3. Tickets, $50. Call 310-825-8655.**

PASADENA MODERN Mar. 16 and 20. Mods primed for "Pasadena Heritage's Spring Home Tour" hear a lecture at Art Center College of Design (Mar. 16) and cruise in their cars through town (Mar. 20). **Visit www.pasadenaheritage.org.**

NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL PAINTBALL LEAGUE'S SUPER 7 PAINTBALL WORLD SERIES Mar. 18–20. Extreme sports aficionados aim, splat, and divvy up $80,000 in video game–like grids next to the Huntington Beach Pier. **9–7. Admission, free. Intersection of Pacific Coast Hwy. and Main St., Huntington Beach, 714-536-9050.**

CATALINA MARATHON Mar. 19. Runners in the afterglow of that *other* marathon can travel 26 miles across the sea for a race that commits 24.7 miles to the offroads between Two Harbors and Avalon. Avalon is also the site of two kiddie runs: a flat-surface 5K and a not-so-easy 10K. **Visit www.PacificSportsLLC.com.**

NATURE BY KAYAK Mar. 19. Kids ages 11 to 16 can explore (if they bring an adult) the archaeological sites, marine biology, and geological features of Upper Newport Bay's Wildlife Preserve. The event is sponsored by the Aquarium of the Pacific. **9–5. Tickets, $50–$55. Call 562-590-3100.**

DESCANSO GARDENS Mar. 19–27. The Spring Festival of Flowers runs until the darling buds of May emerge (starts Mar. 19), the "Late Bloomers" gathering champions every kind of camellia under the sun (Mar. 19–20), and "Easter in the Garden" gets the holiday rolling (Mar. 26–27). **Call for times and prices. 1418 Descanso Dr., La Cañada Flintridge, 818-949-4200.**

DESERT ADVENTURES Ongoing. Hop into Desert Adventures' red Jeep to tour the crevices of the San Andreas Fault, visit a Cahuilla Indian archaeological site, and hike through the serpentine Mystery Canyon. **Call 760-831-0170.**

LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS Ongoing. The conservancy knows whereof it walks on its tours of Spring Street, Union Station, the Broadway Historic Theater District, Angelino Heights, the Biltmore Hotel, and City Hall. **Call 213-623-CITY.**

KID STUFF

NORTON SIMON FAMILY ACTIVITIES Mar. 2, 4, and 19. Kids get into the ring with circus stories at "That's Entertainment" (Mar. 2) and enjoy tours at "Picturing Childhood" (Mar. 4) and "Meet Pablo Picasso" (Mar. 19). **Call for times and prices. Norton Simon Museum of Art, 411 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, 626-449-6840.**

PASADENA SYMPHONY'S MUSICAL CIRCUS Mar. 5. The Instrument Petting Zoo is alive with the sound of "music" before the Los Angeles Children's Chorus belts out a few numbers. **At 8:30. Admission, free. Pasadena Civic Auditorium, 300 E. Green St., Pasadena, 626-793-7172, ext. 18.**

TOMÁS KUBÍNEK: CERTIFIED LUNATIC AND MASTER OF THE IMPOSSIBLE Mar. 5. The professor lays on the magic, acrobatics, and vaudeville shtick. **At 7. Tickets, $7–$15. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 310-440-4500.**

THE VERY PERSISTENT GAPPERS OF FRIP Mar. 5–19. David O supplies the soundtrack and Doug Cooney the book and the lyrics for this riff on George Saunders's tale about a resourceful goat. **Call for times and prices. Kirk Douglas Theater, 9820 Washington Blvd., Culver City, 213-628-2772.**

ANANSI THE SPIDER Mar. 6. The Tears of Joy Theater spins two webs for the trickster spider of West Africa and the Caribbean. **At 1:30 and 3:30. Tickets, $8. La Mirada Theater for the Performing Arts, 14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada, 562-944-9801.**

ALEX FAMILY FILM SERIES Mar. 12. Before director Frank Oz's *The Indian in the Cupboard* screens, wee ones try their hand at movie-themed crafts. **Activities: At 1. Screening: At 2. Tickets, $5.50–$8. Alex Theater, 216 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale, 818-243-2539.**

WORLD CITY Mar. 12. Celtic harpist Patrick Ball tells a tale or two, and the Dunsmuir Scottish Dancers kick up their heels. **At 12:30 and 2. Admission, free. W.M. Keck Foundation Children's Amphitheater, Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave., 213-250-ARTS.**

LET'S MAKE HISTORY Mar. 12 and 20. Kids ages 5 to 12 fashion bolos in "Howdy Partner" (Mar. 12) and study animal tracks in "Is That a Bear over There?" (Mar. 20). **1–2:30. Tickets, $3–$7.50. Museum of the American West, 4700 Western Heritage Way, 323-667-2000.**

THE MAGIC SCHOOLBUS LIVE! Mar. 13. Ms. Frizzle, teacher extraordinaire, brings the television show to life with plenty of audience participation. **At 2 and 5. Tickets, $14–$15. Carpenter Performing Arts Center, Cal State Long Beach, 562-985-7000.**

ART CENTER FOR KIDS Starts Mar. 13. Fourth- to eighth-graders can sign up for classes in robot design, comic book illustration and storytelling, architecture, printmaking, photography, still-life drawing, animation, and advertising at both Art Center College of Design

MARATHON FOTO

campuses. 1–4. Registration, $175. Visit www.artcenter-edu.kids.

DAN ZANES AND FRIENDS Mar. 20. The former Del Fuego front man mixes American roots music and West Indian tunes for a family-friendly groovefest. At 1 and 4. Tickets, $17.50. Pepperdine University Center for the Arts, Pepperdine University, Malibu, 310-506-4522.

RELATIVELY SPEAKING: A VISIT WITH ALBERT EINSTEIN Mar. 20. Actor Marc Silver offers a physics-is-fun one-man show. Lunch and performance: 11–1. Tickets, $20–$24. Performance only: 2–3. Tickets, $6–$11. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 310-440-4500.

A FAERY HUNT Ongoing. Every Saturday morning, Queen Ainé and Darrig the Smelly Troll lead hobbits and their families in an interactive, science-laden quest for a stolen fairy light. At 10:30. Tickets, $10. Franklin Canyon, 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills, 818-324-6802.

FAMILY ROOM AT THE GETTY CENTER Ongoing. Kids can curl up with a good book on an 18th-century-style bed, view David Hockney's photos through a wall of mirrors, and participate in designing a wall-size page of an illuminated manuscript. Call for times. Admission, free. 1200 Getty Center Dr., West L.A., 310-440-7300.

HELEN & PETER BING CHILDREN'S GARDEN AT THE HUNTINGTON Ongoing. This tyke-friendly oasis houses a Fog Grotto, a Prism Tunnel, and Pebble Chimes. Call for hours. Tickets, $5–$12.50. Huntington Library, Art Collections & Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, 626-405-2100.

KIDSPACE MUSEUM Ongoing. The new digs feature the Bumpy Fuzzy Garden, the Shake Zone, the Kid Kaleidoscope, and the very alive Bat Cave. 9:30–5. Tickets, $8. 480 N. Arroyo Blvd., Pasadena, 626-449-9144.

QUEEN MARY'S HAUNTED ENCOUNTERS Ongoing. Go bump through the boiler room, the engine room, the shaft alley, the propeller box, and the first-class pool. Call for times. Tickets, $17–$28. Queen Mary, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach, 562-435-3511.

FARMERS' MARKETS

A fresh market seems to be cropping up in the Los Angeles area every month, and with the array of fresh produce is the indelible feeling of community. Here are some of the pickin's, mostly culled from three well-tended Web sites: www.seasonalchef.com, www.cafarmersmarkets.com, and www.localharvest.org.

MONDAY

BELLFLOWER Oak and Clark Sts., 9–1.
SOUTH GATE Tweedy Blvd. and Pinehurst Ave., 9–1.
WEST HOLLYWOOD Plummer Park, 1200 N. Vista St., 9–2.

TUESDAY

CULVER CITY Washington and Venice Blvds., 3–7.
NORWALK Alondra and Pioneer Blvds., 8–1.
PASADENA E. Villa St. and Garfield Ave., 8:30–12:30.
TORRANCE Charles H. Wilson Park, 2200 Crenshaw Blvd., 8–1.

WEDNESDAY

FULLERTON Woodcrest Park, 450 W. Orangethorpe Ave., 8–2.
HOLLYWOOD Sears, 5601 Santa Monica Blvd., 1:30–5:30.
HUNTINGTON PARK Salt Lake Park, Bissel St., north of E. Florence Blvd., 9–1:30.
LOS ANGELES Saint Agnes Catholic Church, Adams Blvd. and Vermont Ave., 2–5.
NORTHRIDGE Northridge Fashion Center (north end), 9301 Tampa Ave., 9–1.
SAN DIMAS Bonita Ave. between Monte Vista and San Dimas Aves., 5–9.
SANTA MONICA Arizona Ave. and 2nd St., 9–2.
WESTCHESTER 87th St. and Truxton Ave., 8:30–1:30.

THURSDAY

CARSON Bonita and Carson Sts., 9–1.
CENTURY CITY Constellation Blvd. between Avenue of the Stars and Century Park East, 11–3.
CHINATOWN 727 North Hill St., 3–7.
EL SEGUNDO City Hall, 350 Main St., 3–7.
FULLERTON Wilshire Ave. between Harbor Blvd. and Pomona Ave., 4–9.
GLENDALE 100 N. Brand Blvd., 8:30–1:30.
LOS ANGELES La Cienega Blvd. and 18th St., 3–7:30.
LOS ANGELES 73& S. Figueroa St., 10–4.
REDONDO BEACH Torrance Blvd. and Harbor Dr., 8–1.
SIGNAL HILL Walnut Ave. and 27th St., 2–7.
SOUTH PASADENA Meridian Ave. and Mission St., 4–7.
THOUSAND OAKS Oaks Shopping Center, corner of Wilbur Rd. and Thousand Oaks Blvd., 3–6:30.
WEST HOLLYWOOD 647 N. San Vicente Blvd., 2–7.
WESTWOOD Weyburn Ave. and Westwood Blvd., 1–7.

FRIDAY

COVINA Citrus Ave. in front of Civic Center, 4–9.
EAGLE ROCK 2100 Merton Ave., 5–8:30.
HERMOSA BEACH Valley Dr. between 8th and 10th Sts., noon–4.
LONG BEACH 5th St. and Promenade, 10–4.
MONROVIA Myrtle Ave. at Olive Ave., 5–9.
VENICE Venice Blvd. and Venice Way, 7–11.
WHITTIER Bailey St. and Greenleaf Ave., 8:30–1.
WILSHIRE CENTER Mariposa Ave. between Wilshire Blvd. and 6th St., 11:30–3.

SATURDAY

BURBANK Olive Ave. between Glen Oaks Blvd. and 3rd St., 8–12:30.
CALABASAS Calabasas Rd. and El Cañon St., 8–noon.
CERRITOS Park Plaza and Towne Center Drs., 8–noon.
GARDENA Hollypark Methodist Church, 13000 S. Van Ness Ave., 6:30–noon.
LOS ANGELES 43rd St. and Central Ave., 9–1.
PASADENA Pasadena High School, Paloma St. and Sierra Madre Blvd., 8:30–12:30.
SANTA MONICA Arizona Ave. and 3rd St., 8:30–1.
SANTA MONICA Airport Ave. and Donald Douglas Loop, 8–1.
SILVER LAKE 3700 Sunset Blvd., 8–1.
TORRANCE Charles H. Wilson Park, 2200 Crenshaw Blvd., 8–1.
VERDUGO VILLAGE 4300 Verdugo Rd. at Shasta Circle South, 2:30–6:30.
WEST COVINA S. Glendora Ave. and Lakes Dr., 7:30–11:30.

SUNDAY

ALHAMBRA Monterey and E. Bay State Sts., 8:30–1.
BEVERLY HILLS 9300 block of Civic Center Dr., 9–1.
CLAREMONT 2nd St. between Indian Hill Blvd. and Yale Ave., 8–1.
ENCINO Victory Blvd. and White Oak Ave., 8–1.
HOLLYWOOD Ivar Ave. between Hollywood and Sunset Blvds., 8–1.
LARCHMONT VILLAGE Larchmont Blvd. between Beverly Blvd. and 1st St., 10–2.
LONG BEACH Marina Dr., south of 2nd St., 9–1.
LOS ANGELES 8400 Melrose Pl. between Melrose and Croft Aves., 9–2.
MONTROSE 2300 Honolulu Ave., 9–1.
PACIFIC PALISADES Swarthmore Ave. between Sunset Blvd. and Monument St., 8–1:30.
PALOS VERDES Peninsula Center parking lot, Hawthorne Blvd. and Silver Spur Rd., 9–1.
SANTA CLARITA College of the Canyons, lot 8, Valencia Blvd., 8:30–noon.
SANTA MONICA Ocean Park Blvd. and Main St., 9:30–1.
STUDIO CITY Ventura Blvd. and Ventura Pl., 8–1.
WEST HOLLYWOOD Melrose Pl., 9–1.
WEST LOS ANGELES 1645 Corinth Ave., 9–2. LA

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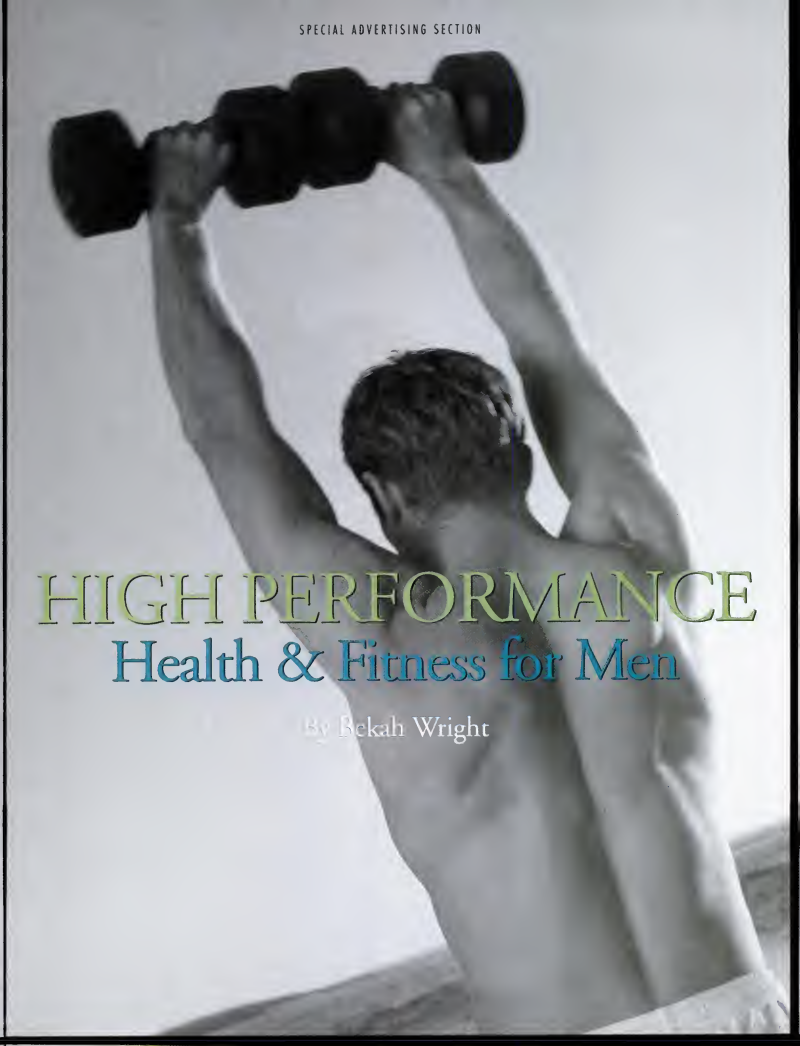
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Health & Fitness for Men

By Bekah Wright

WHETHER YOU WERE BORN IN 1957 OR 1975, YOU CAN STILL HAVE A 2005 MODEL BODY. Prevention and maintenance is key for staying in top form. Knowledge of available resources is also invaluable when tackling obstacles that stand between you, perfect health, and the perfect body.

Face Time

Men work, live, and play hard, often in the great outdoors. The elements can wreak havoc on skin and result in photo damage. "Sun damage can cause uneven pigmentation as well as red and scaly spots which should be screened for cancer," says Zein Obagi, M.D. "Exposure to sun can also aggravate conditions such as rosacea." Sunscreen is the best course of prevention. A regular skin regimen will help, too. "To keep skin cells healthy, and active, plus to slow down aging, a medical grade system of skincare is preferable," says Obagi, whose Nu-Derm™, Proderm™, and CRx™ product lines have had impressive results.

Flawless skin is achievable. Men with pseudo folliculitis barbae, or ingrown hairs appearing as pimples on the face, can improve their skin through various methods. "There are a lot of good things to treat the condition from topical antibiotics, Retin A, special electric razors, and prescription shaving creams," says dermatologist Rhonda Rand, M.D. "Make sure to shave when the skin is moist and warm, moving the razor in the direction of hair growth versus against it." Laser treatments have also proven successful. "Getting rid of hair growth improves the condition," says H. Michael Miller, M.D., of Advanced Laser & Anti-Aging Medical Center.

Acne scars benefit from laser treatments, too. "It's important for men, especially those on the job market, to look younger and better," says Robert Seltzer, M.D., of Advanced Laser & Anti-Aging Medical Center. "Five or six treatments once a month can cause a dramatic difference in skin's appearance with no downtime." Ridding yourself of outdated tattoos, or mishaps, can also be accomplished with lasers. "Tattoo removal has come a long way," says Rand. "A professional tattoo takes between five and seven treatments to remove and scarring is rare."

Buzz Cut

A full head of hair no longer means turning to a wig, plugs, or hair transplant. Whether genetic baldness, thinning hair, or general hair loss is at issue, all respond to a technique called MesoHair™. "It gets to the root of the problem, literally, by eliminating problems within the hair follicle that cause hair to thin," says Sam Assassa, M.D., of Beverly Hills Aesthetics. Areas of the scalp are microinjected to stimulate hair growth. After six weekly sessions, clients can see a difference. Results are permanent and only require monthly maintenance visits for six months along with the use of a special shampoo.

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Scheduling routine check-ups and cleanings are vital to ensure there are no issues with teeth and gums. Visits to the dentist need no longer be dreaded events. Many have created an environment for patients akin to a day spa. Kimonos, slippers, and blankets provide comfort, aromatherapy soothes, and massage chairs and on-staff masseuses work out kinked nerves. Escape is provided via virtual glasses, as well as CD and DVD players equipped with favorite music and movies. "We want to take fear away and leave patients with a memory of relaxation," Tannaz Goodjohn, D.D.S., of the Dental Boutique says of

We want to take fear away and leave patients with a memory of relaxation.

steps like these taken by many dentists. In addition, Grace Sun, D.D.S., of Sun Dental Group provides soup, smoothies, and protein drinks to patients scheduled for longer procedures.

The fear often equated with dentists is due to past experiences with anesthesia. Patients now have options. Goodjohn uses a computerized delivery system of anesthetic that delivers pain-free injections, while others use lasers. "Lasers come in different wavelengths for different procedures and cause less discomfort than traditional methods," says Sun.

Routine cleanings, along with keeping the teeth and gums healthy, help prevent halitosis. "Bad breath comes from bacteria in the mouth that builds up without regular cleanings," says Goodjohn. "Sometimes, though, it can be a systemic problem." In Goodjohn's office, evaluation and education put clients on the path to fresh breath. "We offer a hygiene program and teach our patients to develop great health habits."

Cosmetic issues – alignment, discoloration, and shape – often hamper a smile. Whitening and cosmetic contouring dramatically change the overall appearance of teeth. "Our teeth darken a shade every ten to fifteen years," says Steven Donia, D.D.S. Myriad in-office whitening systems are available to patients. Once the patient and dentist have chosen the one that's most appropriate for them, a home maintenance program is generally recommended.

Adding an aged appearance to teeth is wear and tear. "As teenagers, our teeth have very delicate curves and rounded edges," says Donia. "Function and grinding



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habits cause teeth to take on a square, sharp appearance." Enamelplasty, or cosmetic contouring, give teeth a more youthful look. In addition, patients might also consider bonding or porcelain veneers. "When we lengthen and create edges, it can take ten to twenty years off your smile," says Donia.

The Mystique Of The Physique

Staying in shape takes work, but fitness routines needn't be boring. Crunch Fitness

Oftentimes for men, more important than working hard on alignment is learning to relax and surrender into the pose.

in West Hollywood keeps things interesting with their unique classes. "Our newly renovated ride studio allows for 'Cycle Karaoke,' 'Live Wire Ride,' and 'Ride in Movies' classes," says publicist Shetal Amin. "Sculpting the physique through 'Liquid Strength' and 'Kardio Katami' classes can net members a 3% loss of body fat in nine to ten classes. The club also couples fitness with fun through their pick-up dodgeball games. "Dodgeball is loud, fast, and intense," says Amin. "It's a huge hit."

Keeping fitness more "Zen" are yoga classes. Annie Carpenter, senior teacher and head of Yoga Works' Flow Department, says the company's classes benefit members

in numerous ways. "Yoga increases flexibility, reduces stress, builds strength, and decreases the risk of injury," she says. When approaching the discipline, Carpenter says mindset is key. "Oftentimes for men, more important than working hard on alignment is learning to release and surrender into the pose."

Kick It Up A Notch

If workouts and diets aren't achieving the results they should be, a doctor's visit may be in order. "If you're suddenly losing muscle mass, are tired, and experiencing memory problems, you could have a growth hormone deficiency," says Susan Pekarovics, M.D., an internist and endocrinologist. Once this is determined to be an issue, human growth hormone, delivered through an injection or supplements, can improve the body's functions. "Human growth hormone is able to reverse the aging process for a more youthful appearance in terms of muscle mass," says Pekarovics. "It also diminishes fat deposits in the waistline area, decreases depression, and improves cognitive function."

Another solution might be new prescription drugs targeted for weight loss. "Being overweight makes you prone to major health issues such as heart disease, diabetes, and back problems," says Guven Uzun, M.D., of the Beverly Hills Pain Institute and Neurology. "New medications which act on the hypothalamus and control appetite can help." Patients have been known to lose between five and fifteen pounds a month. In addition to medication, Uzun has a nutritionist on staff to help patients change dietary habits. Routine workouts are also an important ingredient for success. "Exercise is significant in increasing endorphins and the brain's blood flow along with slowing aging," says Uzun.

Certain procedures may resolve problem areas that cause embarrassment, such as gynecomastia. "Some men have larger breasts from abnormal fat deposition which may be due to hormonal or medical problems," says Jacob Haiavy, M.D., of Inland Cosmetic Surgery. "The condition can be treated with liposuction, gland removal, or a combination of both." Love handles and





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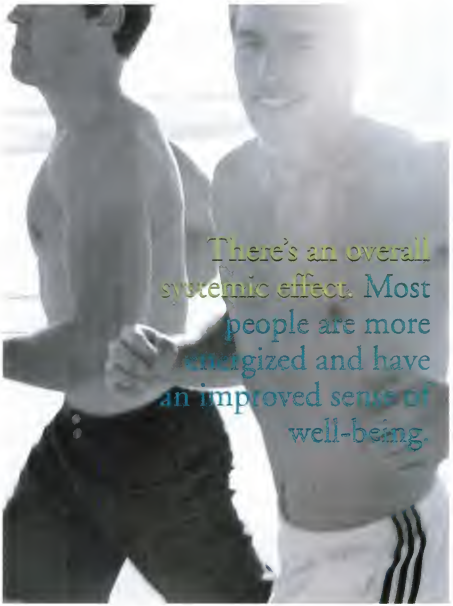
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the tummy area also benefit from liposuction. For those worried about downtime, many procedures are now done endoscopically and call for a week's recovery time.

MesoSculpting™ is another option to consider. "With MesoSculpting™ we give microinjections that melt fat down," says Assassa of Beverly Hills Aesthetics. "You can lose one to two sizes and improve problem areas like love handles, a double chin, or eye bags." The effects are gradual, but progress can be seen in two to three sessions spaced two to three weeks apart. There are localized side effects, such as bruising and swelling, which can last up to three days. "MesoSculpting™ is as effective as liposuction, costs half the price, and has no scarring," says Assassa.

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The Recruit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 103 » his own job before becoming a recruiter. "It was a blast," Waud says, "like playing a big ol' board game." Matt strokes the tuft on his chin. He has spent less than an hour in the presence of Waud, and yet Waud already senses Matt is ripe. He leans forward. "If we could find you a job out of 200 and some odd jobs that fit what you're looking to do, maybe get you a little incentive, maybe a little extra money in your pocket, do a little traveling or something like that," he says, "do you think this is something that you'd look into?" Then Waud sinks back in his chair, cocks an eyebrow, and waits.

It might be that Matt is caught up in the moment, that he is focused on the excitement and adventure being sold, not the sacrifice. It might be that he is responding to Waud's authority, to a confident and imposing adult figure who has deemed him worthy of attention. Or it might be that the army just means cash for a new car. Matt never asks for time to think.

"Definitely," he says. "Oh yes, definitely."

"Congratulations," says Waud, shaking Matt's hand. "That's all *I* can offer. Nothing in any recruiting station will put you in the army."

He explains the next step, taking the full three-hour exam known as the ASVAB, short for armed services vocational aptitude battery. It will require a formal appointment and a trip to Los Angeles. "If you want," Waud says, "I could run you down there Friday afternoon, take the test, and—boom!—have you back by dinner."

"Can I get a shirt?" asks Matt, eyeing the ARMY OF ONE freebies scattered around the office.

"You show back up," Waud says, "you get a shirt."

MATT HAS MORE than 30 numbers programmed into his cell, each with a distinct tone. Most are snippets of streetwise bravado—50 Cent, Lil' Kim, Chingy, DMX—except for his mother's number, which rings to the *Ghostbusters* theme, and his father's, which is from *Batman*. Neither of them had known he was going to meet with a recruiter. "They haven't really known me for two and a half years," Matt says. "I'm a completely different person than when I left."

He breaks the news first to his mom. She is a human resources analyst for Cooperative Personnel Services, a recruiter in her own right who screens and hires employees for county governments in Northern California. "She kind of flipped out," Matt says. "She was like, 'What? *No!* Do you know how many people are dying over there?' " Then he calls his dad. He is the director of underwriting for Health Net of California, one of the country's largest managed care providers. "I think he's living vicariously through me," Matt says. "He was happier about it than I was."

TAKING THE ASVAB means journeying into another acronym, MEPS, the military entrance processing station. The country has 65 of them—their motto, "Freedom's Front Door"—through which all recruits must pass. Southern California's is in the African American heart of southwestern L.A., where La Brea Avenue meets Baldwin Hills. For a Simi Valley recruit, the drive there can be like a trip through the looking glass, an hour or two in thick traffic, from the 118 to the 405 to the 10, making the transition from suburban exile (Waud's office is a few blocks from the courthouse that rendered the Rodney King verdicts) to urban core (MEPS was torched during the ensuing riots).

Even though he arrived in Ventura County more than two years ago, Matt has hardly set foot in L.A. Entering the city, he cranes his neck, staring at people, studying graffiti, absorbing a panorama scrubbed clean by the autumn rains. The young inhabit a naive universe, their restless energy at least partly a function of their innocence. But Matt's blind spots, for a kid so bright, can be mystifying. As the car veers onto the Santa Monica Freeway, away from the Westside, he points to the hills. "Is that the real one?" Matt asks. There is silence, none of his escorts too sure of the question. Matt is undeterred. "The real Hollywood sign?" he asks again.

Down La Brea, across Jefferson, over the railroad tracks, and into a parking lot behind the Rancho Cienega Sports Complex, the car finally pulls to a stop. Matt's driver, Staff Sergeant Sean Donahue, leads him through a chain-link security gate, into the rear of MEPS, past an armed guard and a metal detector. He instructs Matt not to leave the facility for any reason—the neighborhood being too dangerous, according to the military, even to step out for a smoke. At the front desk they are stopped by a soldier in battle fatigues. He nods at Matt's beanie. "Sir, can you take off your hat for us?" Matt looks at Donahue. "It's a military thing," Donahue says. Two hours later Matt is done, early this time. His score is even better than before, a 96, which puts him in the top 4 percent of the nearly half a million applicants who take the ASVAB every year.

"That's pretty good, right?" Matt asks.

"That's excellent," Donahue says.

"There's only one question I didn't know," Matt says. "What does *acquiescence* mean?"

AS PROMISED, Matt receives his T-shirt. It is XXL. He asks if there is anything smaller. "Unfortunately," Waud says, "it's one size fits all." Matt puts himself at five feet seven, 120 pounds. He is two months shy of his 21st birthday yet has the build of a junior high scrub. For as long as he can remember, size has been his bane, a barrier to sports, to romance, to commanding the respect of teachers and bosses. Waud tries to empathize. "The thing I always had going for me, I was the tall guy," he says. "Girls love tall guys," Matt says. "That was my *only* game," Waud tells him. Matt has dreamed of getting a tattoo across the top of his back. If he survives boot camp, he will do it. He already knows what it will say: TOO MUCH TO PROVE. "It's not that I have a Napoleon complex," Matt says. "I'm not out to prove that I'm better than other people. It's just to prove that I'm average, that I can keep up with everyone. I've had to prove myself—what I know, what I am—to other people my whole life." Instead of a tattoo Matt has a decal. It is stuck across the rear window of his car, now a Hyundai, the cheapest, barest-boned model available. In neat white letters it says: TRUST NO BITCH.

If Matt had a girlfriend—and that is a term he uses warily—her name would be Olga Hernandez. She entered Cal Lutheran the same year he did, a working-class Mexican American girl from San Fernando who shares his outsider's perspective on phoniness and wealth. Olga had been a softball star in high school; she has hips and curves and enough muscle to work as an undercov-

er security guard at the JCPenney in the Thousand Oaks mall. She once took Matt home, to see her old neighborhood and meet her Spanish-speaking parents, the first boy she had ever invited. "Basically we have a relationship, just not spoken," Matt says. "We can lie together on the bed and cuddle for hours. But it's a something-we-never-act-on type of thing." He is sitting outside, at one of the several Starbucks he frequents in Simi Valley, smoking Marlboros and sipping his usual, an iced grande vanilla latte, which he orders at least two or three times a day, no matter the weather. He has begun to shiver. His teeth are chattering. His neck is twitching. He often ends up this way, chilled, underdressed, nerves jangling from tobacco and caffeine. It somehow makes him look smaller, to be so clenched. He is anxious to see Olga, to tell her about the army. "She doesn't know yet," Matt says. "She'll probably pass out."

He drives the Hyundai to Cal Lutheran. There is only one parking spot near Olga's dorm. He starts to back in. It is spacious, wide enough to accommodate a Hummer. Before he can straighten out, Matt's rear tire bangs into the curb. He cranks the wheel, then tries again. Forward and back, cutting and braking—three, four, five times before he finally gets himself parallel. Street racing was Matt's equalizer, the antidote to being slight. Maybe the army is, too, a force so much larger and more powerful than he, with all the weaponry he needs to impose his will on an adversary. Matt shrugs. "I can drive like a maniac," he says, "but I can't park worth a shit."

THE ARMY wants to know everything about Matt.

"Have you registered for the selective service?" Waud asks him.

"What's that?" Matt says.

"Have you ever been a conscientious objector?" Waud asks.

"What's a conscientious objector?" Matt replies.

"Are you allergic to wool?" Waud continues. "Are you missing a testicle?" Asthma? Jaundice? Collapsed lung? Sleepwalking? Bed-wetting? Night blindness? Periods of unconsciousness?

Matt shakes his head.

"Have you ever been treated for alcohol dependence?" Waud asks.

"Well," Matt deadpans, "I was a college student for two years."

The interrogation, which requires *X*s and initials on every answer, signals Matt's graduation from prospect to full-fledged recruit. The scope is so vast, the details so difficult to verify, he is having a hard time taking it seriously. Then something hits home. Waud asks about prescription drugs. It leads to a story about childhood, to the roots of Matt's self-image. When he was 11 or 12, his indifference to school already causing him trouble, Matt was treated for attention deficit disorder. He took Ritalin, then Adderall, but stopped once he got to college. In truth, he never believed in the syndrome or accepted that he was among its sufferers. His mother, however, thought it explained a lot. She became a champion of ADD education, even serving as chairperson of the Cameron Park chapter of CHADD, the nation's leading support group. "It's like, all of a sudden my mom got interested in it," Matt says, "and then all of a sudden, all her kids had it."

"It's so weird," Waud says. "I know I would have been an attention-deficit kid if I was growing up in a big city like this or in this era. Fortunately I was on two and a half acres of country yard, and my parents were like, 'Go outside and kick the ball against the wall, go run with the dogs...' "

"It's just kind of like being a kid," Matt says.

"Most of the time, the ones that are quote-unquote *hyper* and not paying attention—it's mostly because they're advanced," Waud says.

"And bored," Matt says. "They're creative, and they want to do other stuff that's actually stimulating."

"I think that's one of the worst things that's happened to society," Waud says. " 'I can't control my kids—give 'em drugs.' "

For Matt there was another, unforeseen consequence of taking this medication, much of which was amphetamine based. Throughout puberty, while other kids were sprouting, Matt had no appetite. "You're never hungry," he says. "I blame my being small on that."

HE WOULD HAVE given anything for Olga to be awed by his mettle, humbled by his selflessness. But her reaction is neither adulatory nor weepy. "Why do you want to do that bullshit?" she snaps at Matt. "Especially now?" Olga wants to be an FBI agent or, maybe, the first female owner of the Dodgers. Her dorm room is decorated with posters of Ken Griffey Jr. and the rap trio G-Unit. A bullet casing and a pair of miniature handcuffs hang from the rearview mirror of her Jeep Laredo. There is nothing fragile about Olga; there is, she worries, about Matt. "I won't say I baby him or that I, like, have pity on him," she says. "He's a smart boy. But he's, like, naive in certain things. He says, 'Sometimes, you act like my mom.' Well, sometimes he acts like a little kid."

In the lexicon of recruiting, Olga is known as a COI, or center of influence. It applies to anyone in the community, friend, relative, coach, pastor, whose perspective on the military, pro or con, might sway a potential enlistee. Olga's politics are shaped by the personal—a friend from high school, now a marine, is on his second tour of Iraq. "The first time, he loved it," Olga says. "He was all gung ho, like, 'Let's go out there and kick some ass.' The next time, he called me and he was crying on the phone. I guess he saw his sergeant blow up and a bunch of his friends—three of them died, plus the sergeant—and he was crying, saying, 'This is crazy. I don't want to be here. You know, we've killed so many innocent people.' He goes, 'It's funny, but a lot of soldiers are talking about killing themselves.' It's so sad. I mean, this is a guy who was just, like, totally hard-core."

Olga does not want to see Matt hurt. She does not want to be the one hurting him. "Every day I try to figure out why he's really doing this," she says. "I just don't think it's him."

ON A DRIZZLY Wednesday afternoon, a week after his first interview with Waud, Matt is summoned to physical training, or PT, as he comes to know it. To get through boot camp, Matt will need to do 42 push-ups in two minutes, 53 sit-ups in two minutes, and a two-mile run in less than 16 minutes and 30 seconds. The strength portion does not especially worry him—he would be glad to bulk up—but running at such a speed strikes Matt as an alarming stunt. He has been smoking since he entered Cal Lutheran, three-quarters of a pack a day now. He started because of a girl;

they experimented together while dating, she lost interest in him, he kept the habit. All day long Matt has been smoking. On his way to PT he smokes again.

For the next hour, as the weather grows worse, Waud plays drill sergeant, barking commands at the young recruits, seven or eight of them, Matt gasping and wincing, the occasional passerby with an umbrella staring at their choreographed exertion. It is a rare sight, these soldiers-to-be stomping around in the muck of a city park, forming columns, turning in unison, practicing 30-inch steps, then trotting, jogging, and breaking into a steady run. As they loop around the playground, Waud prods them with cadence, the call-and-response chants that are a staple of army life.

"I wanna be an airborne ranger," he cries.

"I wanna be an airborne ranger," replies Matt, his voice rising above the chorus.

"Live a life of death and danger," Waud sings.

"Live a life of death and danger," Matt sings.

"Airborne ranger," they repeat. "Death and danger."

Back at the car, Matt lights up. He is fretting over the necessity of going cold turkey once he gets to basic training, but he seems energized by the camaraderie of this early initiation rite, by what the army calls the "soldierization" process. Societies have engaged in such rituals since the beginning of time, culling their young males, subjecting them to hardship, and ultimately transforming them into that culture's notion of what it means to be a man. In the postindustrial age, manhood tends to be measured in economic terms, a reflection of salary and career. The army remains one of those primal tests, a chance to earn entry into a group as mighty as any on this planet—to be sworn and reborn, transcending civilian life. "You kind of leave that world behind," Matt says, inhaling deeply. "Even when you come back, you're still not quite part of it."

Matt's favorite movie is *Tombstone*, the 1993 take on the Wyatt Earp–Doc Holliday story. He has watched it maybe 30 times. "They both know there's really good odds they're going to die," Matt says. "But at least they'll die fighting for something. It's like taking a risk to prove a point." That same notion, of the underdog outmaneuvering a superior foe, even if it means going down in a blaze of glory, permeates the rest of Matt's interests. He admires Confederate general Robert E. Lee and Nazi field marshal Erwin Rommel, both of whom became renowned for their tactical brilliance despite fighting for a doomed and discredited cause. He has read Sun Tzu's *Art of War* four or five times, each in a different translation. In high school, he lost days engaged in MMORPGs, or massive multiplayer online role-playing games, sort of Internet-based versions of Dungeons and Dragons. "I just like the idea of pulling off unbelievable things," Matt says, "of beating someone with your mind."

Until the army, the closest Matt had come to applying those lessons was at Chevron, his employer before Denny's. While working an all-nighter in 2003, he was robbed by a man with a snub-nosed revolver and "the craziest, piercing eyes." The gun was stuck inches from Matt's face. Matt played it cool, reaching into the register and scooping out the cash. Afterward, his manager wanted him to take some time off, maybe see a psychologist. Matt reported for his next shift. "It seems like an experience that might alter other people's lives, like, 'Oh, I love life,' but it didn't change me in the least," Matt says. "Didn't even faze me. I've never really cared about death. It's not that, 'Oh, I'm invincible.' I know that I'm mortal. It's just that—it's kind of bad to say, I know people look down on this, but I don't really care—it's just that, What is there to live for in this life?"

THE MORNING after PT, Matt is back at Denny's, behind the register, an apron hanging from his hips. It is three days before Halloween, and the restaurant is decked out in graveyard decor, a mock tombstone chattering at customers. Matt is at the front, greeting and seating, his banter practiced and polite: "How many?... Wherever you like.... Have a good one...." A couple of middle-aged regulars, Tammy and Richard, walk in, oddball sweethearts who are something of a handful. They used to visit Matt when he worked at Chevron. Now they look for him at Denny's. Among the staff they are known, not so affectionately, as "the Simples." "You guys need anything?" Matt asks. "No, we're just here to pester," Tammy says.

Matt has a brother, Ben, who is 18 and consigned to a group home. Severely autistic and afflicted with Tourette's syndrome, he alternates between sullen withdrawal and violent fits. Matt, more than anyone, has learned to reach Ben, to calm his rages and brighten his mood. "I was always the one to protect him," Matt says. "I'm the only one he really listens to." Tammy presses her face against a toy-crane machine by the front door. She slips in some quarters and begins rocking the joystick, skimming over the trove of stuffed animals with the game's mechanical claw. "This thing is hopeless—totally, pathetically hopeless," she announces. Matt steps out from behind the counter, a fistful of quarters to the rescue. He takes aim at a pumpkin-shaped bear. "I'll win him," Matt says. "I don't put anything past Matt—if he puts his mind to it, he can do it," Richard says. Matt lowers the crane. The claw closes in on the bear's head. As he raises it, the animal lurches, then drops back to the pile. "So dang close," says Tammy. Matt tries again. "Right there—grab it, grab it, grab it!" Tammy shouts. The bear slips again. "Noooooooo!" she wails. Matt feeds the machine one more time. "If I had the money, believe me, I'd do it for you," Tammy says. Matt snares the orange-bellied animal. It tumbles out the chute. Tammy clutches her prize. "Oh, thank you!" she cries, dancing across the foyer.

Matt's manager glares at them. She tells Matt to clean the pie carousel. He begins spraying, wiping the glass, removing expired desserts. Then she tells him to wait tables. He begins taking orders, serving drinks, running back and forth to the kitchen. A line has formed up front. She tells him to get back to the register. A laminated poster—the Denny's "Declaration of Hospitality"—hangs behind him. To Matt it is just another front, a pledge without substance. By now, customers are complaining. The manager snaps at Matt again. Matt tears off his Denny's shirt. The lunch rush is on, the restaurant in limbo. There is not much principle at stake; Matt will be gone soon, anyway. But there is drama. The army has given him a once-in-a-lifetime chance to play Johnny Paycheck, an excuse not to be nice. "Bye," he says, dropping his uniform on the counter. "I quit."

MATT'S MOM FEARS the army will take the best years of her son's life. She knows, from her own work, how hard it is for veterans to reenter the job force with marketable skills, how easily they can return home damaged, even broken, by what they have experienced. "Matt thinks my objections are just that I'm an overprotective mom, that I'm afraid he's going to get killed in Iraq," Michelle says. "But there's a side of him that's not adult, that doesn't know the reality of it."

Matt's dad hopes the army will redeem the best years of his son's life. He is sure that a military environment—"a place where there's character and discipline and integrity"—will straighten him out, especially compared with the indulgences of a fancy Southern California college. "It's perfect for him, really," Mark says. "Once he gets adjusted to it, I think he'll just thrive."

When the marriage began to crumble, Matt sided with his mom. She is the realist of the family, grounded, analytical, and flexible enough to let him smoke and drink under her roof. With Matt's encouragement, Michelle tried to pull the youngest two children out of Capital Christian. "Me, personally, I would never send my kids there," Matt says. Mark obtained a court order, keeping them enrolled. The legal battle now centers on Ben. Mark is challenging Michelle for custodianship; in Matt's eyes his father could commit no greater hypocrisy. "Everything to my dad is public appearance—what other people think," he says. "Having a kid like that, who will embarrass him in public, he never accepted it. He never wanted to deal with it. He kind of treated him like he wasn't even his son." It is not hard to see the army as Matt's refuge from this turmoil, an organization that—good or bad—is at least *real*: demanding, messy, hands-on, but without pretense. As a soldier, he might not be free, but he will be unavailable, transported to a world beyond his parents' reach.

The irony, of course, is that his father—the figure Matt is trying to distance himself from—sees in this parting the seeds of a homecoming, a necessary step before reconciliation. When Michelle left, she handed Mark a list of his faults. Among them was his obsession with military history. He has a library full of World War II books. He has turned European vacations into tours of bunkers and shrines. Mark wonders if her displeasure over Matt's interest in the army is not really about something else, about the son becoming the father. "God says in his Bible, 'The word will not return void,'" Mark says. "Matt knows the truth and has been taught the truth. Somewhere along the way, I am confident, he will grab that truth and take it as his own."

HIS ENLISTMENT comes on his mom's birthday. Matt needs to be at MEPS before dawn. Waud offers to drive him down the night before and put him up at the Westin Los Angeles Airport, another of those invisible intersections between the military and civilian worlds. The hotel is a MEPS way station, the official lodging of recruits on the eve of signing up or shipping out. The third floor hosts a MEPS office, where newcomers are checked in every evening, and a MEPS lounge, where they can watch movies or send e-mails. Waud goes over the rules: no room service, no minibar, no pay-per-view TV, no wandering after the 10 p.m. curfew. "Get some sleep," he tells Matt. "I can tell you, tomorrow you're going to be tired." Matt spends most of the night smoking, reclined by the swimming pool, which is drained and cordoned off with police tape. Jets roar overhead. Palms sway in the damp coastal haze. L.A. feels distant, a shimmering dreamscape, less important than it has ever been. Matt goes to his room. He has brought nothing but the clothes on his back. He watches *Law & Order* and *CSI*. Then he goes out to smoke again. "I'm not in a friendly mood today," he says. "Everyone's getting ready for the tough front they'll have to put on tomorrow."

The wake-up call comes automatically, a 3 a.m. reveille. By 3:30, Matt is downstairs, in front of the lobby, already lighting a smoke. A breakfast buffet has been laid out. He can stomach only a few bites. A Westin courtesy shuttle is idling at the curb. Matt smokes another, his last for the next dozen hours. At a quarter to four, he is on the bus. It is dark, stuffy, tight, a payload of 30 or 40 bleary kids, none too sure of the right posture or vocabulary—sarcasm, formality, indifference—for such a portentous occasion. Matt clutches his paperwork, a manila envelope stamped with his name and social security number. Another 15 minutes go by. "Hurry up and wait," somebody in the back whispers. The driver, at last, pulls onto Century Boulevard, rumbling through Inglewood, then up and over the hills. At MEPS, the doors are locked. The recruits line up outside and wait again. "Okay, single-file line, back it up," booms a sergeant in camouflage wear. "Everyone sitting down, stand up. Face me. All right. Good morning." He goes over the rules of MEPS: no hats, no backpacks, no sunglasses, no piercings, no cell phones, no smoking, no sleeping, no sagging pants. Matt hikes his up. The corridors are labyrinthine, with colored arrows—blue, red, yellow, green—leading to each phase of induction. Glossies of President Bush and Donald Rumsfeld hang on the walls. In one corner, there is an arcade, with toy guns strafing the screens of Police 911 and Dark Silhouette.

For the next several hours Matt is poked and prodded, weighed and measured, fingerprinted, vision tested, drug tested, HIV tested, and directed to bend and spread. As the morning drags on, the time-honored intramural rivalries of the military can already be seen taking shape. A couple of would-be marines taunt Matt, insisting that the army is always far behind them, at the rear of any attack. "Oh yeah?" Matt shoots back. "Well, we've got more combat deaths in Iraq than you." A marathon of *Rocky* movies play back-to-back in the waiting room. Matt buys some TGI Friday's potato skins from a vending machine; unsure of the rules, he sneaks them, one at a time, from the pouch of his sweatshirt.

Nobody joins the military—indeed, nobody leaves MEPS—without a trip to the counseling office. Recruiters can make all the promises in the world, but only a guidance counselor can put an offer on the table, turn the recruiter's pitch into reality. It is possible to spend an anxious night at the Westin, get on that fiendishly early bus, endure hours of intrusive examination, then hours more of boredom, only to discover that the job that had sounded so perfect has already been filled. Recruiters sometimes get a bad rap, as if they were the ones playing bait and switch. But they operate in the dark, too. "We cross our fingers, hold our breath, pray on the little Buddha belly," says Waud, who is barred from mingling with Matt until a contract has been signed. Basically, MEPS is to recruiting what the sales manager's office is to buying a car. Everyone

who enters these doors is essentially a captive, deliberately worn down and conveniently unaware of what products are actually in stock. There is still no obligation to join. But it would take an uncommonly resolute kid to withstand such a grind, then walk away if the job being offered did not sound quite right. By the time he is introduced to his counselor, Matt is so frazzled, he looks ready to take anything. "I'm gonna get drunk tonight," he says. "Well, no, not drunk. Yeah...*drunk*."

The counselor is a former army ranger, Sergeant First Class David Gardner. Bald and plump, he is sitting at a computer, the screen set to an American flag. "Okay, what are you looking at doing, bro?" he asks Matt.

"Um, my main ones I want, like the top-of-the-list ones are, like, intelligence and counterintelligence," Matt says.

"Let's talk about it real quick. I want to make sure you understand what you're getting into. A lot of people look at it and think, 'I'm 007.' It's not like that."

"But there's fieldwork?" Matt asks. "It's not just a desk job?"

"Oh yeah," Gardner says. "There's no safe job from going to Iraq."

"Oh no—see, I'd want to go," Matt says. "I just don't know, with all the training, if I'd make it in time."

"I don't know, either," Gardner says. "But I would imagine the war on terror's not just going to be wrapped around Iraq. That's my prediction. There's other countries on the hit list out there."

As it turns out, counterintelligence is not available, but intelligence analyst is. "Happy?" Gardner asks. "I'm good," Matt says. He will become known as a 96-Bravo. His enlistment period will be four years of active duty plus another four in the reserves. The army wants him to do 9 weeks of basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, followed by 17 weeks of specialized training at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. If he can leave as soon as November 24, the day before Thanksgiving, he will receive a $6,000 "seasonal" bonus. He will get another $8,000 as a reward for his college background. It is a $14,000 jackpot, the first half of which will be payable in mid-2005, once he gets to his duty station. Where that might be is anyone's guess. "Shit, they're giving me 14 grand to join!" Matt says. "It kind of means someone wants you, if they're willing to pay you that much."

As if on cue, Waud appears. Matt is Private Ludwig now. "Congratulations, once again, young man," Waud tells him. Outside, Matt fumbles for a smoke. It is 4 p.m., Friday traffic, a long stop-and-go slog back to Simi Valley. "I like this song," Matt says. Waud turns up the radio. Social Distortion is on KROQ:

Reach for the sky
'Cause tomorrow may never come

Depleted, overwhelmed, Matt finally gives in to the rhythms of the drive. His chin drops to his chest. He slumps forward, bobbing against his seat belt. He sleeps until Waud cuts the engine.

TUESDAY IS ELECTION Day. It is the first presidential race of Matt's adult life. He declares himself a Bush supporter but has never bothered to register. "Who'd you vote for?" He is talking into his cell. "You would....That's 'cause you believe in propaganda.... He's full of crap, Olga.... Anyways, Miss Political, I'm not the one who likes *Fahrenheit 9/11*.... Yeah, right.... Michael Moore's so minority and all.... Shut up, fat girl.... Don't even try to talk shit...." Then Matt's battery dies. "She's going to be freakin' pissed," he groans.

Matt's relationship with Olga is like a chess match. All positioning and leverage, angles and gambits. Olga is accustomed to guys falling for her. Matt has seen them, tongues wagging, done before they even get a chance. He does not want to be among them. "I'd sleep with her, just because I'm a guy," Matt says. "But I'm one of her few friends that's resisted for so long. She's used to everybody worshiping her, running back to kiss her ass." If their relationship were intimate, it seems safe to say, Matt probably would not be seeking his future in the army. Sex has come too sporadically for him to just walk away, especially from a prize as coveted as Olga. It is not as if the choice, though, has belonged only to him. "I don't want to sound mean," Olga says, "but I could kick his ass, and I don't want to be with a guy whose ass I can kick."

Now there are only three weeks left, perhaps the last three weeks they will share together. Matt is planning their final night. Olga sends him text messages, saying they need to talk. Matt calls but gets no response. "She seems like she has something she wants to tell me," he says. "Lately," says Olga, "he's been acting different, like he wants to tell me something."

IN THE END there is no party, no tears. Matt piles everything he owns into the back of his car—dirty clothes mostly, two pillows, a basketball—and heads north, up the 5, to leave it all with his parents. He flies back down. They do not follow. He crashes in the Cal Lutheran dorms, only $35 to his name. Olga tries to reach him again. Matt is no longer playing along. "She needs someone to teach her a lesson," Matt says. "I want her to have regrets." Matt had taken out his earrings for his trip to MEPS; by the time he remembers to put them back in, the skin has already closed.

He spends his last night with an old flame, the same girl who turned him into a smoker. He takes her to the Spearmint Rhino, in Oxnard, for a gaze at the all-nude gyration. Whatever Matt thinks he is going to get out of this encounter, the arrival of cops, weapons drawn, storming the joint, cannot be good. There has been a report, apparently, of a couple with a gun. They zero in on Matt first. He scoops up his $1 bills from the table. They pat him down, quiz him, run his ID. "I'm leaving for boot camp tomorrow," Matt pleads. By the time they let him go, his date is interested in nothing more than a hug. "I'm more of boyfriend material," Matt says later, "than a hit-it-and-quit-it guy." The next morning he pulls out his wallet. He is at Starbucks with some Cal Lutheran friends. They had bet him—ten bucks—he would not be able to score.

One of them, Micah Kapono Naruo, is a shrewd chess player, Matt's nemesis on the board. "He's usually more defensive," Micah says. "I usually do more attacking." Sergeant Waud is expected any minute. Matt's farewell is a hasty match, one he knows he has no chance of winning.

"Matt!" Micah scolds, sliding his bishop into an undefended rook.

"Damn it," Matt says. "I forgot about that guy."

"Check," Micah says.

"I hate it when you do that shit," Matt says.

"Check," Micah says.

"Hmm," Matt says. "Now I'm just trying to delay the game."

Before he can fly out, Matt needs to return to MEPS for a final check-up, which means two more nights at the Westin. It occurs to him, between the sleeplessness and the drudgery, that he is being subjected to more rules and regulations than he has been at any time since leaving Capital Christian. He is about to embark on a cross-country odyssey, be entrusted with multimillion-dollar equipment, perhaps risk his life on a far-off battlefield, and yet he is being treated like a child—no smoking, no drinking, no girls, no leaving campus. The army is supposed to be the final act of Matt's desheltering, his entry into a world of grit and guts. Yet it also shares much with the church: the hierarchy, the vestments, the leaps of faith, the commandments not meant to be questioned. Matt will be doing big things but within a narrow structure.

Matt's file, from his examination at MEPS, lists him at five feet four, 110 pounds. It is hard to know what to make of these new figures—the measurements, essentially, of a jockey. Matt is sure they are wrong, which is possible. Bureaucracies can be careless. But it is just as possible, maybe more so, that they are accurate. Neither explanation is welcome: The army has sold him short, or he has overestimated himself.

On his last night at the hotel, Matt decides to shave. First he does his goatee. Then he returns to the sink and wipes away his mustache. His head was already cropped; before they parted, his dad had bought an electric trimmer. Now Matt is decidedly impish, four or five years taken off with the fuzz. He looks to be regressing—a version of Dorian Gray, growing younger as he turns into a soldier. "Damn, my face feels weird," he says, stroking his naked chin.

As always, the wake-up call comes at 3. Breakfast at 3:30. Bus at 4. Only this time, as it idles in the predawn chill, Matt cannot be found. He is scheduled to travel with seven other privates, all headed to Fort Leonard Wood. They do not yet know who he is or what he looks like, but they recognize that a comrade is missing. One of them calls Matt's room. Another searches the restaurant. A third climbs up the steps of the bus. "Is there a Matt Ludwig on board?" he shouts into the darkness, getting only coughs and snickers in response.

For the last six weeks, Matt's identity has hinged on this day. Joining the army was less a decision than an intuition, a moment of clarity, a burst of autonomy. Now that the time has arrived, how could he be missing it? What could he possibly be thinking? Finally, Matt stumbles out of the Westin's elevators, dazed and sheepish. "I never heard the phone," he mumbles, peeved at himself for bungling such a simple task, and so soon into his new life. He gets on the bus. "It's okay," someone from the back drawls, "we still love you." The last on, Matt's group is the first off at LAX: Southwest, flight 2719, bound for St. Louis. It is the busiest travel day of the year.

At the gate he finds a Starbucks. The usual, iced grande vanilla latte. But this time, no place to smoke. He has just enough battery left in his cell phone to check for messages. He powers it on. Nobody has called. At 6:45, a tangerine glow creeps across the tarmac. Matt takes his place in line. On his boarding pass, they have gotten his name wrong: Lidwig. The forecast calls for rain, turning to snow by the time he arrives. LA

Shopping Directory

RAIN DATE, PAGES 112-113: Dior by John Galliano dress and jacket at Christian Dior, Beverly Hills, 310-278-4700; Adelson necklace at Kaviar & Kind, L.A., 310-659-8857; Salvatore Ferragamo blazer and pants at Salvatore Ferragamo, Beverly Hills, 310-273-9990; Marc Jacobs shirt at Marc Jacobs, L.A. (opening this month; phone number not available at press time). **PAGES 114-115:** Dolce & Gabbana suit and shirt at Dolce & Gabbana, Beverly Hills, 310-888-8701; Giorgio Armani shoes at Giorgio Armani, Beverly Hills, 310-271-5555; Ralph Lauren gown at Ralph Lauren, Beverly Hills, 310-281-7200; H. Stern bracelet at 800-HSTERN; Rosalina ring at Neiman Marcus, Beverly Hills, 310-550-5900. **PAGES 116-117:** Burberry trench coat and dress at Burberry, Beverly Hills, 310-276-7701; Michael Kors suit at Neiman Marcus, Beverly Hills, 310-550-5900; John Varvatos shirt at John Varvatos, L.A., 310-859-2970; DKNY sneakers at DKNY, Beverly Center, L.A., 310-289-9787; Sass & Bide dress at Fred Segal Flair, Santa Monica, 310-451-7178; Erica Courtney necklaces at Erica Courtney, L.A., 323-938-2373; Rosalina necklace at Neiman Marcus, Beverly Hills, 310-550-5900. **PAGES 118-119:** Valentino top and skirt at Valentino, Beverly Hills, 310-247-0103; H. Stern earrings at Geary's, Beverly Hills, 310-273-4741; Giorgio Armani jacket at Giorgio Armani, Beverly Hills, 310-271-5555; John Varvatos pants at John Varvatos, L.A., 310-859-2970; Chanel dress at Chanel, Beverly Hills, 310-278-5500; Ralph Lauren sandals at Ralph Lauren, Beverly Hills, 310-281-7200; Erica Courtney necklaces at Erica Courtney, L.A., 323-938-2373. **COLOR FORMS, PAGES 120-121:** Charles Chang Lima jacket at On Sunset, L.A., 310-289-8711; Roland Mouret tank at Satine, L.A., 323-655-2142; Milly skirt at Neiman Marcus, Beverly Hills, 310-550-5900; Alan Friedman ring at Alan Friedman, Beverly Hills, 310-278-4944; Christian Dior eye shadow at Bloomingdale's, Beverly Center, L.A., 310-360-2700. **PAGES 122-123:** Jennifer Nicholson blouse and shoes at Jennifer Nicholson Studio, L.A., 310-399-3877; Rebecca Taylor vest at Barneys New York, Beverly Hills, 310-276-4400; Nicole Miller skirt at Nicole Miller, L.A., 310-652-1629; David Webb ring at David Webb, L.A., 310-858-8006; Roberto Cavalli vest at Roberto Cavalli, Beverly Hills, 310-276-6006. Nars eye shadow at Saks Fifth Avenue, Beverly Hills, 310-275-4211; MAC eye shadow at MAC, L.A., 310-854-0860. **PAGES 124-125:** Jill Stuart dress at Fred Segal, L.A., 323-655-3734; Stephen Webster earrings at Maxfield, L.A., 310-274-8800; David Webb ring at David Webb, Beverly Hills, 310-858-8006; Sonya Ooten earrings at Nyali, L.A., 323-931-2438; Diane Von Furstenberg dress and bangles at Bloomingdale's, Beverly Center, L.A., 310-360-2700; Celine sandals at Celine, Beverly Hills, 310-273-1243; Lauren Schaefer earrings at Evergreen Elephant, South Pasadena, 323-258-5151; Alan Friedman ring at Alan Friedman, Beverly Hills, 310-278-4944. L'Oréal lip gloss at www.loreal.com. **PAGES 126-127:** Luella dress at Saks Fifth Avenue, Beverly Hills, 310-275-4211; Moschino coat at Saks Fifth Avenue, Beverly Hills, 310-275-4211; Vicini belt at www.giuseppe-zanotti-design.com; Cesare Paciotti slingbacks at Cesare Paciotti, Beverly Hills, 310-273-3220; Tom Binns earrings and bracelets at Curve, L.A., 310-360-8008; Mille K. cardigan at A. Mason, L.A., 310-205-6900; Rachel Pally scarf at www.rachelpally.com; Laura Mercier blush at Saks Fifth Avenue, Beverly Hills, 310-275-4211. LA

Fantastic Faux!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 111 » arm is clearly just a glove attached to a long pole. The Invisible Girl's disappearing act is little more than the blinking-out effect used in *Bewitched*. The Thing costume is pretty good—its head frowns and smiles and talks, just like the ones created for the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* movies—but the Torch effects are limited. The same flame-throwing shot is reused several times in front of different backgrounds. When the Torch finally does "Flame on!" the film switches from live action to cartoon. "Not to hurt anybody's feelings," says Staab, "but it's cheesy when you look at it now."

The summer of 1993, trailers were placed in movie theaters and on Corman videos like *Carnosaur*. Cast members embarked on a promotional tour, screening clips for SRO crowds at the Shrine Auditorium and signing autographs at Universal CityWalk and the San Diego Comicon. Smith brought the Thing head to events from South Dakota to Michigan to Illinois to Florida; the movie was hyped in *Cinefantastique* and on the cover of *Film Threat*. The world premiere was set for January 19, 1994, at Minneapolis's Mall of America, with proceeds going to the Children's Miracle Network and the Ronald McDonald House. "It was movie-star training," says Hyde-White. "It was my shot at becoming an action star."

And then the awful phone calls began. The film, it turned out, would not be released. "I was totally shocked," says Smith. "Just devastated." Hyde-White, who had been hearing rumors for weeks, went into "denial mode." Sassone heard the news directly from Eichinger. "He explained it the best way he could, because, I mean, look, he knew that we had all worked our asses off on this thing," says Sassone. "Frankly, I think they thought it was just going to be this piece of shit...so I think it kind of unnerved them when it wasn't. I think they felt kind of bad."

Slowly the news about Eichinger's struggle to maintain his option made the rounds. Cast members heard that the producer had never intended to release the movie, that the film was just a way for him to retain the rights so that he could make a bigger film. "It would have been nice if somebody would have said, 'Look, what are you guys doing? There's no intention for this to be released,'" says Smith. "I don't know why they couldn't have been up front with us from the beginning."

FINDING OUT the specifics of why the movie was made and why it was buried and—here's the big one, at least for the director and the cast and crew—what happened to the film itself is like being caught between games of dodgeball and hot potato. Some say it was never meant to be seen by anyone; others that the decision to kill it came only after the film was completed. To complicate matters, both Eichinger and Lee are producers on the new film and reluctant to say anything that might keep people from seeing it.

Sassone wasn't told much about the backroom deals. The story he recites is the one he's picked up from the trades and the Hollywood grapevine, basically the Stan Lee version of events: that Eichinger never intended to release the movie. "I don't even know if the film still exists," he says. "They may have burned it. The last I heard was that Roger Corman had it."

"No, I don't have it," says Corman. He had the answer print for 60 days, but then he sold it to Eichinger. "Bernd owns the film," he says. Corman dismisses Lee's claims, citing the film's relatively large advertising budget as evidence that it was slated for release. This makes sense—would a guy who is rumored to have once fired a craft services worker for serving Diet Coke instead of a generic brand blow money on trailers and a promotional tour for a fake film? "Everybody liked the film," Corman says. "We had a contract to release it, and I had to be bought out of that contract."

Eichinger also rejects Lee's version. "No, that's not true," he says. "That's definitely not true. It was not our intention to make a B movie, that's for sure, but when the movie was there, we wanted to release it." He doesn't own the film now, though. Avi Arad, who became an executive at Marvel in April 1993, has it. Given credit for reversing Marvel's run of awful movies with the hit *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* franchises, the Israeli-born former toy designer is now listed as producer on all Marvel films.

"Avi's a very fine guy," says Eichinger, "and he calls me up and says, 'Listen, I think what you did was great, it shows your enthusiasm for the movie and the property, and I tell you what. I understand that you have invested so-and-so much, and Roger has invested so-and-so much. Let's do a deal.' Because he really didn't like the idea that a small movie was coming out and maybe ruining the franchise, you know? So he says to me that he wants to give me back the money that we spent on the movie, and that we should not release it." Eichinger doesn't know what happened to the film after Arad bought it. Did Arad watch the movie, even once? "I don't think so," Eichinger says. "I don't know. I mean, you should ask him."

Arad is producing the new version of the film, and one must go through Marvel publicist Jeff Klein to reach him. When asked to set up an interview with Arad about the original Fantastic Four film, he quickly responds, "Oh, he doesn't talk about that movie." Beat. "Just kidding!" says Klein, who then laughs. He says he'll try to arrange an interview in the next couple of days.

A week passes. Klein is trying to make it happen. Conversations get shorter and shorter; Klein wants to know why an interview with Arad is necessary, since "he had nothing to do with the old movie." Didn't Arad purchase the film from Eichinger in 1993? Yes, he says, almost grudgingly, but he had nothing to do with *the production*. After a few more calls, Klein delivers the bad news. "I don't think we're going to be able to make that happen," he says. His voice is just as chipper as on the first call. "It's just not something he's interested in talking about. He doesn't want to talk about the old movie. It's all about the new movie! That's looking back, you know. He's looking forward!"

In the meantime, Lee is invited to take part in a photo shoot with the original cast. He is told how much it would mean to those guys. "Glad to do it," he replies in an e-mail. Klein contacts Lee the next day. The following day, Lee writes that he's reconsidered and decided to decline the shoot. "With the new Fantastic Four movie coming out," he writes, "I'd rather not be associated, in any way, with the old one."

Oof! Marvel buried the film more than a decade ago, making sure that it wouldn't be shown even on the Sci Fi Channel at 3

a.m., and the company still treats it as if it were something shameful, something one might catch, like consumption. Tim Burton's *Batman* blew up in 1992, and nobody sweated the campy '60s TV show or all those awful *Superfriends* episodes or tried to pretend that the Jap-slapping 1943 film *The Batman* had never happened. They figured, rightly, that audiences would be smart enough to tell the difference.

So what happened, really? Arad, it turns out, did purchase the film, in 1993. He acknowledged the sale at a 2002 press junket for *Spider-Man*, when he was asked about Corman's *Fantastic Four*. Arad told the gathered reporters that he had bought the film "for a couple of million dollars in cash and burned it." While Arad was visiting Puerto Rico in 1993, a stranger approached him and commented on the Fantastic Four T-shirt Arad was wearing. The man excitedly told him about the upcoming premiere, which was news to the Marvel executive. Concerned that the Corman film might tarnish the property, Arad bought it and ordered all prints destroyed. He has never seen the film.

Eichinger, for his part, had been in talks all along with *Home Alone* director Chris Columbus about doing a big-budget version. The two had spoken before the Corman film was made but were unable to reach a decision because Marvel's hesitance to renew Eichinger's option had put the project in limbo. They were in contact off and on after that. In the end, he made a small fortune simply by going forward with his ploy until someone paid him handsomely to stop. Whether or not Eichinger was planning to release the Corman *Fantastic Four*, he was dreaming of a bigger movie the entire time, even if it meant scuttling the smaller film.

EICHINGER'S stratagem remains unique, unheard of even among Industry professionals who have seen almost every trick. "I'm not saying it never was done before, but I've never seen anything like that," says Don Kopaloff, an Industry veteran of six decades and Stan Lee's agent at the time. "I can imagine the expression on [former Marvel COO Joseph] Calamari's face when [Eichinger] said, 'Okay, we're making the picture with Roger Corman's company,'" Kopaloff says with a laugh. Others note with amusement the huge gap between what Marvel envisioned and what Eichinger intended. "Maybe he complied with what the contract really said," says entertainment lawyer Robert F. Marshall, "but nobody thought that he was going to be making a million-dollar movie."

In 1994, Eichinger finally signed Chris Columbus to make a $40 million adaptation. Over the next ten years other directors—including Peyton Reed, Sean Astin, and Peter Segal—came and went. Several scripts were written, then shelved. Preproduction started in 1996, then stalled. Casting rumors popped up on fan sites—George Clooney is Mr. Fantastic! Jessica Simpson is Sue Storm! Tim Robbins is Dr. Doom! Fans reported every scrap of gossip, much of it coming from Arad himself.

The new film went into production in the fall of 2004, with a reported budget of $90 million. It stars Ioan Gruffudd, Jessica Alba, Chris Evans, and Michael Chiklis. Arad and Columbus are producers, as is Eichinger. Stan Lee, who is listed as an executive producer, makes a cameo as a doorman.

Original Invisible Girl Rebecca Staab was listening to her car radio when a teaser came on the air. "Coming up," the DJ said, "an interview with Michael Chiklis about the biggest movie of next summer!" Ten minutes later another teaser, and then another. "This movie just got bigger and bigger, and I'm like, What movie are they talking about?" she says. "Finally they say *Fantastic Four*, and I'm like, *Aaaaah!*" It's a mock scream, the one she releases, but a scream nonetheless. "That's when it feels like a dagger in your gut. You're like, No, no, that's *our* movie."

It is a testament to the cast and crew that nobody seems overwhelmingly bitter about what happened, at least not now. It would have been a different story if Mr. Fantastic had blown his brains out or drunk himself to death, or if the Invisible Girl had pinned a FUCK YOU MARVEL note on her chest and thrown herself off the Hollywood sign, but nothing like that ever happened. Everybody kept working, in projects from *Charmed* and *Catch Me If You Can* to *Win a Date with Tad Hamilton!* and *Nip/Tuck*. All the magical things they had dreamed about, though, all the great stuff that was going to happen once people saw them as leads in a big Hollywood movie—A-list stardom and the sequels and TV shows that would have followed if the film was a hit—never materialized. And while they may quietly curse the execs that kept them in the dark for so long, no one holds Corman or Lee responsible for what happened. Sassone and the cast members call Corman a lovely guy, a stand-up guy, if a cheap one; Lee is a genius, an inspiration, the Creator, capital *C*.

There are moments, though, when the anger flares. Underwood describes what happened as "the seedy, cheesy side of Hollywood."

"I wish these people would at least have had the fucking decency to say, 'Look, let's at least give this guy a decent copy of his work,'" says Sassone. "Then the guy who made the movie, and all the people who made this film, could at least say, 'Hey, look at this movie,' and they could show it proudly to their family and their friends." He's happy that bootlegs are all over eBay and comic book conventions, bootlegs that Corman calls "theft," that Eichinger says he has no knowledge of, that creators Lee and Kirby watched with friends, years later, in their homes.

The irony is that Sassone's movie is probably bigger in death—or the suspended animation of an eBay DVD—than if the film had been shown in theaters. Chances are, it would have been just another Marvel footnote if Eichinger had kept that January premiere date at the Mall of America, or if Arad hadn't been wearing that Fantastic Four T-shirt in Puerto Rico.

Pamela Senatore, Sassone's manager for the past 12 years, still remembers how awful everyone felt. "Please don't make it sound like everyone has these sour grapes and they've never gotten over it or anything like that," she says, launching into a half-angry, half-"that's Hollywood" account of how her client and the cast *all got screwed*. She uses terms like *dastardly* and *duplicitous* and *uberish* and *raw deal*, sounding like an angry, overprotective mom, which she sort of is. "I think, in the end," she says, "it is a story of success in that they didn't let something like that cut them off at the knees and say, 'Screw it, I'm out of here.' Because if anything is gonna do it, that's the kind of thing that does." LA

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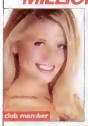
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A VERY JERRY YEAR

BY DREW FRIEDMAN

2005 IS SHAPING UP TO BE A BIG YEAR FOR JERRY LEWIS! HE WAS JUST PRESENTED WITH THE LOSANGELES FILM CRITICS CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD! FOLLOWING IS A PROJECTION OF MORE JERRY EVENTS TO COME...



MARCH 2005: THE FIRST ANNUAL JERRY AWARDS RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN COMEDY ARE PRESENTED, AND THE FIRST RECIPIENT IS JERRY HIMSELF!

JUNE 2005: THE FORMER DINO'S LODGE ON SUNSET STRIP REOPENS AS JERRYO'S!



JULY 2005: MARTIN AND LEWIS REUNITE! UNFORTUNATELY, NOT THE LATE DEAN, BUT RICKY MARTIN, ATTEMPTING TO JUMP-START HIS FLAGGING CAREER BY HITCHING HIS STAR TO JERRY'S.



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DECEMBER 2005: FINALLY, THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN IS REFURBISHED.



END

LETTERING: PAUL KELLY

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Car and Driver, March 2004



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